

THE
LOVE OF THE ATONEMENT



BY THE
BISHOP OF CALCUTTA

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THE LOVE OF THE ATONEMENT.

A Devotional Exposition

OF THE

FIFTY-THIRD CHAPTER OF ISAIAH.

BY THE

RIGHT REV. R. MILMAN, D.D.,

BISHOP OF CALCUTTA.

.....

“ La pena dunque che la Croce porse
S’alla natura assunta si misura,
Nulla giammai si giustamente morse
E così nulla fu di tanta ingiura.
Guarda poi, allà Persona che sofferse
In che era contratta tal natura.”

Dante, Paradiso, VII. 40.

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P R E F A C E.

DEVOTIONAL expositions of Holy Scripture have been much sought after lately by earnest minds amongst us. The translations of foreign works of meditation on the Passion have been counted, in some points, unsatisfactory. Expurgations and corrections are generally necessary, and suggest ideas of peril. They occasionally dwell too exclusively and minutely on the human nature and sufferings of our LORD.

S. Bernard long ago observed the imperfection and danger of this habit. It has necessarily a tendency toward an irregular and unstable excitement, and may soften the mind below the true standard of masculine Christian love. It does not agree with the practice, either of Scripture itself, or of those wonderful interpreters of Holy Scripture, the ancient fathers and teachers of the Church.

I have endeavoured to add to the supply vouchsafed

to us a particular exposition of the 53rd chapter of *Isaiah*. I have taken pains to guard against the danger which I have just mentioned, without sacrificing the devotional character of the work. I have striven to avoid dwelling too exclusively, either on the human, or the divine, nature and history of *JESUS*, viewing the study of His humanity and passion as the way into the knowledge of His Godhead and His Glory.

The plan of the work, of which this volume contains the first part, is simple.

The subject of the meditation or lecture is first stated. Then I gather the interpretations of the Spirit from other parts of Scripture. I add comments from several of the great expounders in the early centuries chiefly, mostly out of their deeper and more valuable works of doctrine and devotion ; and occasionally I translate passages, especially on subjects where one shrinks from using one's own language. More commonly I express their thoughts freely in my own words, or guide my own thoughts by them.

There seem to be many expressions and doctrines of Scripture, and these of the most encouraging nature, and setting forth the privileges of the faithful in the most touching and glorious colours ; for example, the Life in *CHRIST*, and the revelation of the Face of

GOD, which have been somewhat disregarded of late years. But they stand in the pages of our Bibles ; and they were the great fountains of comfort and joy to our blessed forefathers in manifold trials. May GOD in His mercy reopen them to us, and may we safely drink of their abundance !

CONTENTS.

Introduction	PAGE I
------------------------	-----------

CHAPTER I.

The Great Question. Who asks it. To whom it is addressed.	8
---	---

CHAPTER II.

The Great Question. Its meaning	16
---	----

CHAPTER III.

The Great Withering. Sin original. Actual	34
---	----

CHAPTER IV.

The Great Revival	46
-----------------------------	----

CHAPTER V.

The Great Revival	59
-----------------------------	----

CHAPTER VI.

The Great Mistake. The commonness of our LORD's appearance	66
--	----

CHAPTER VII.

The Great Mistake. Our LORD's Quietness, and Patience. Hence despised by the Jews	83
--	----

CHAPTER VIII.

PAGE

The Great Mistake. How the same mistake still reigns . . . 91

CHAPTER IX.

The Great Mistake. The remedy for this mistake . . . 102

CHAPTER X.

The Rejection. Man's choice, as seen in the Jews . . . 117

CHAPTER XI.

The Rejection. As seen at present. Need of care . . . 138

CHAPTER XII.

The Sorrow. Our ignorance. GOD's knowledge of Sorrow.
 The five purposes of CHRIST's sorrow. The three first . . . 150

CHAPTER XIII.

The Sorrow. The two last purposes . . . 171

CHAPTER XIV.

The Hiding of CHRIST's Face. 1st. The meaning of the
 expression . . . 183

CHAPTER XV.

Its Hiding. The cause of it man's Impurity. Of this three
 kinds. Conclusion . . . 202

THE LOVE OF THE ATONEMENT.

INTRODUCTION.

THE fall has perverted our judgment. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the SPIRIT: for they are foolishness unto him."¹ He counts that which is great, little; that which is little, great. A hand held close to your eyes, will hide the whole prospect of earth and sky. The natural man suffers the world to hold up its hand before the eyes of his understanding. It hides eternity from him. It conceals heaven, hell, CHRIST, GOD. He looks on the various images and figures of pleasure, comfort, wealth, honour painted by Satan on this hand's-breadth of Time; and as they are close to his carnal heart, he considers them of the utmost importance. They fill his whole limited vision. He forgets all beyond and behind.

When the world withdraws its hand, there is a change. When the SPIRIT enlightens our understanding, suddenly or gradually, as it pleases GOD, the vision of the eternal world appears. That which was little becomes great; that which was great becomes little.

¹ 1 Cor. ii. 14.

This world, its life, pleasure, comfort, wealth, honour, dwindle, and fade, and are ready to vanish away. They shrink into their proper nothingness. They become "foolishness," sad, bitter, and trifling beyond all utterance. The world to come, the unchangeable, the abiding, the eternal, the misery and anguish, confusion and shame, the honour and glory, bliss and happiness, which are there to be found, assume continually more weight, more grandeur, more importance.

"Hell is naked, and destruction has no covering." GOD "takes to Himself His great power, and reigns." "The true Mount Zion, the City of the Living GOD, the heavenly Jerusalem, the innumerable company of angels, the general assembly, and Church of the first-born which are written in heaven, GOD the Judge of all, the spirits of just men made perfect, JESUS the Mediator of the new covenant, and the Blood of sprinkling which speaketh better things than that of Abel," come out with awful and glorious distinctness, and the soul overwhelmed and wondering, though comforted, cries, "How dreadful is this place! Surely GOD is in it, and I knew it not. This is none other than the House of GOD, and this is the gate of heaven."

Esau was a "cunning hunter," but he knew not the relative value and importance of objects. He was weary and hungry. A little hunger is no great matter. His birthright was certainly better than a mess of pottage. But the carnal mind always exaggerates its pains. He saw the food, he smelt the savour, "What profit shall this my birthright do me?" It gave nothing immediate, nothing save CHRIST and

heaven ; and they were far away. The oath of surrender was easily made, the food soon swallowed. "He did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way."¹ What mattered it? The earth was as fair, the sky as bright, his arm was as strong, his foot as swift, his arrows as sure, the prey as plentiful as before. Nothing was lost except his birthright, and that he thought nothing. Or rather he did not trouble himself to think at all. He had no spiritual discernment. The history seems strange and startling! How many blessed birthrights are sold as readily, and sold as cheaply, and parted with with as little concern every day! Did Esau think in the morning, what was about to befall him before evening? When he went gaily forth to his hunting, did he foresee the loss which it should occasion? He was not expecting any particular trial, yet it was close at hand. He did not hear the Tempter's footsteps, yet he was following harder upon him than he was upon his quarry.

The fruit of a long course of carelessness, the end of many steps of unbelief, the result of many years of profaneness were summed up and concentrated in that moment's temptation. It came upon him suddenly without notice. He failed on the trial. The Tempter at once prevailed against him. He reaped the bitter fruit ; he fell over the hidden precipice ; he received the reward of his unconcern in that fatal loss of which he afterwards so sorely and so vainly repented. He had not anticipated the danger beforehand. He scarcely observed the alteration at the

(¹ I Gen. xxv. 33.

time. He did not remember it at night. It troubled not his slumbers. Yet he had lost his birthright for ever.

At this Lent season when the LORD was in the wilderness forty days tempted of the devil, we naturally withdraw ourselves in spirit from the turmoil of Babel, the vanities of earth. Then we fix our attention in particular on the Holy Scriptures, till the beams which emanate from their pages collect themselves into a speaking form, the Great Apostle and High Priest of our profession.

That He may plead with us face to face He withdraws the world's hand from before our eyes. He bids us open them that we may see, and unstop our ears that we may hear. And of what will He discourse with us? Surely in particular of the Love of the Atonement.

"CHRIST crucified," says S. Augustine, "is milk for babes, and meat for strong men;" milk for babes in the simplicity, meat for the strong in the mysteries, of its unfathomable love. Whither shall we turn then in Holy Scripture?

Isaiah is the Gospel Prophet. The 53rd chapter is the keystone of his prophecy, the summary of the Gospel. Illuminated by the Christian revelation it throws out from every sentence rays of unspeakable brightness. It exhibits the One Foundation in the most distinct and vivid colours. It sets forth "evidently before our eyes JESUS CHRIST, and Him crucified." With great variety of expression, in manifold and striking imagery, it points out our need, and dwells on the gift of the One Atoning Sacrifice. As

we read it, the world may well fade, earth grow dim, life shrink into its nothingness. Death and judgment, hell and heaven, and all the great truths of the eternal world group themselves around the Cross. The littleness and the greatness, the misery and blessedness of man are equally unfolded. That Cross with its wonderful burden, the suffering, expiring, dying, incarnate GOD, explains to us the great enigmas of Providence. The "Sea of Glass mingled with fire,"¹ the judgment full of love on which the Saints stand, opens its transparent depths. Standing in the midst of the Throne and the four beasts and the elders the Lamb as it had been slain takes the sealed book out of the right hand of Him Who sitteth upon the Throne to reveal and expound it to us.

The subject divides itself into two parts :—1st, the Suffering itself; 2ndly, the effect and application of the Suffering.

These two parts, however, are more or less blended together in the passage; it will also be impossible to keep them altogether distinct. They mix themselves so intimately, that they cannot be entirely separated. Still, the first part will be the chief matter of this volume; and, returning to the prophecy, we shall find that the sentences will naturally lead us to this arrangement. For the considerations set before us are the following, which being unspeakably important, we will designate great.

1st. There is the great question, which is a preface to all that follows.

2ndly. There is that withering, which rendered the

¹ See Rev. xv. 1.

Incarnation necessary ; the withering of mankind ; a great withering,—i. e. original sin, and its development.

3rdly. There is the mistake or error which resulted from that withering,—the great mistake of unbelief.

4thly. Flowing from, and completing that mistake, comes the rejection,—the great rejection.

5thly. The sorrow which the former doctrines unite to form, and which that rejection fills up, is next portrayed, and it is a great sorrow.

6thly. Then comes the hiding, the concealment of the face which that sorrow occasioned ; and it is a great hiding.

In meditating on these six points, we shall complete the first part of our subject, and gain a view of the SAVIOUR'S Suffering, which may increase our sense of the love of His Atonement. And all these are great matters ; they are worth attention. Wherefore, let the profane and careless, let the men of this world “eat and drink, and go on their way.” They know not whither they are going, nor what they are doing. They may be cunning hunters, skilful farmers, diligent labourers, learned students, solemn philosophers, subtle politicians, famous conquerors ; but they cannot distinguish that which is great from that which is little. “They walk on still in darkness.” Their eyes are blinded, and their ears stopped, and GOD “bows down their back always.” “It is indeed the height of folly and bestial madness, for him who was created in his Maker's image, not to perceive his original constitution, and all the dispensations of which he has been the object, and from these infer his own preciousness.

Forgetful of the heavenly image which he is flinging from him, he is receiving the image of the earthly.”¹

Mad and senseless Nebuchadnezzars, their crown fallen from their heads, their understanding taken away ; eating straw like oxen, feeding on the swine-husks, and never satisfied ! They are so full of the world, as to be empty of GOD ; so full of earth’s wisdom, as to be void of heavenly wisdom. They will go upon their way. They will pull down their barns, and build greater. They will clothe themselves in purple and fine linen, and fare sumptuously every day. They will “eat, and drink, and be merry ;” they will be “rich, and increased with goods, and having need of nothing.”² They will say, “We see.” “We are they that ought to speak ; who is LORD over us ?”³

But let us retire into GOD’S house, or withdraw into our chamber in silence, and there listen for the “still small voice.” Let us watch, as in devout meditation, before the believing eye, He draws aside the veil which was rent in twain from the top to the bottom, by the death of JESUS ; and mark, as with His holy Finger He points up and down, and to and fro, until we have mastered the shape, and the colours, and the meaning, the breadth, the length, the depth, the height, of all the objects which we behold with “the Lamb as it had been slain.” For those objects are indeed great ; and when we humble ourselves before GOD into our proper dust and ashes, we shall know their greatness. Until that moment we know nothing ; “for man being in honour hath no understanding, but is compared to the beasts which perish.”

¹ S. Basil, i. 263.

² Rev. iii. 17.

³ Psalm xii. 4.

CHAPTER I.

“Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?”—Isa. liii. 1.

THIS is a great question—rather, it is *the* question; there is no other question worth an answer.

What makes a question great? Perhaps the greatness of Him Who puts it; perhaps the number to which it is addressed; perhaps the extent of its meaning; perhaps the importance and necessity of the answer required. These elements of greatness are certainly to be found in this question: 1. Who are they who ask it?

If a little prattling child asks us some trifling question, we take little pains to answer it; we are busy, or anxious, or drowsy, and we scarcely hear it; we do not grasp its sense; it matters not. If, however, an old and experienced friend visits thee, rising up early to find thee,—if he comes, not once or twice, but many times, day after day, and when he cannot come himself, sends others, the wisest and most like himself who can be found, to ask thee anything; still more, if the rulers and governors of thy country,—if an Alexander, a Cæsar, a Napoleon, the greatest and mightiest upon earth, on whose lips hang temporal prosperity and adversity, life and death, address thee through

others first, and then by themselves in person, with the greatest possible solemnity and majesty ; if they were to show by their demeanour that the question was weighty in their opinion ; if, with their terrible eyes fixed upon thee, amidst their assembled court, the gathered wisdom and reputation of the world, they put the question to thee in the most serious manner possible ; if all with them, and the whole world, were waiting for thy reply : And if, furthermore, thou wert assured that thy own prospects for life depended entirely upon thy answer ;—thou wouldst consider beforehand, and be careful at the time ; thou wouldst anxiously weigh the words addressed to thee ; thou wouldst search out their meaning, and never rest until thou hadst found the right answer, and given the expected reply.

Once more ; if some such great man were to give himself up to death, in order to show us the importance of the question ; if he were to say to us, “ You think that it is no matter ; but I know better. I must make thee consider, and learn the meaning of the question. I know not how to impress on thy unconcerned heart the great weight which I attach to thy answer, except by dying myself, sadly and fearfully, that thou mayest be persuaded by my pains and blood to give due attention, and reply aright,”—we should surely be moved ; and thenceforth we should see that question written in the sufferer’s blood on the wall of our house, on the sky above and earth beneath, on every object which we look at. We should hear it in every wind of heaven. It would ring in our ears till we died.

Who, then, asks this question, "Who hath believed our report?" The prophet Isaiah utters it, but not in his own name. All the prophets asked it; apostles repeated it. It is in the Law and in the Gospel, in the Old Testament and the New. It is the first question, and the last. All God's servants take it up, and re-echo it down all the generations of mankind. One after another they are compelled to repeat it, by the waywardness and wickedness of the people whom they address.

It began to be asked in Paradise; it will be asked at the LORD's last Coming.

Yes, it was asked in the sweet odours, and balmy airs, and pleasant melodies of Eden, saddening them by its entrance. The trembling shame, the solemn sentence, the outcast pair, the flaming sword, barring return, gave the first melancholy reply.

As sin increased, and lust and violence gained head, it went forth for a century in the preacher's warning tones.

As the door of the ark shut, and the windows of heaven opened, and the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and Noah beheld his predictions of one hundred and twenty years accomplished in the universal deluge, this question reverberated in the rush of the devouring waters, and the death-wail of a world was the answer.

As Lot fled between the guiding angels, and amidst the thunderings and volcanoes of the sudden destruction, durst not look back on the cities which he had left, this question resounded in the roar of the conflagration. The hissing fire, the stifling smoke, and

the yawning gulfs, entombing the cities with their inhabitants, were the only reply.

Amidst the terrors, and glories, and earthquakes of Sinai, the question was borne to the solitary Saint upon the Mount. The riot, and the revel, and the voice of unholy melody, swelling round the idols from all Israel, announced the appalling and heart-breaking answer.

Down all the course of Israel's history the question was repeated in louder, dreader, and more sorrowful accents. The sword, the famine, the pestilence, the devastated field, the wasted vineyard, the burning town, the fires of Jerusalem, the ashes of the holy Temple, the wail of the Prophet's lamentations over the utter desolation, sent out the same answer on the complaining winds.

The question returns with the Captivity. The Prophets are there; it is still in their lips. Wherever a Prophet is, there is this question always; and wherever God's people are, the reply is always the same.

It visits Israel for the last time; the last Messenger is come. It is repeated yet once more, amidst blind eyes opening, and deaf ears unstopping, and dumb lips speaking, and the lame leaping, and devils fleeing, and the dead arising.

It is brought home to them now by the lips of Him Who spake as never man spake. The very words of this text are applied to His preaching. What is the answer?

Ask Golgotha. The gathered populace, the jeering soldiers, scoffing Pharisees, Gentile and Jew, King,

Priest, and people, the tribunal, the unrighteous sentence, the universal yell, the mock, and the scourge, and the thorns, the nails, the hammer, the outstretched hands, the streaming blood, the darkening sky, the quaking earth, the rending rocks, the bowed head, the expiring lips, the death-cry and the death. You read the question and the answer in the Cross. But will not the sign of the Prophet Jonah elicit another reply?

The victory over Satan, the overcome grave, death abolished, One rising from the dead, the Ascension, the outpouring of the Spirit, the fire kindled, the burning words, the summons to repentance, the trumpet-call of apostles, the deaths of martyrs,—in these the question re-visits Israel.

In the foreboding tears of JESUS, in Stephen's death-pangs, in Peter's prison, in Paul's wish to be Anathema, in the application of this very prophecy, in the march of the Roman armies, in the Holy Land once more a wilderness, in the second crash of Jerusalem and her temple, in the "abomination of desolation standing where it ought not," in the overthrow, destruction, and dispersion of the nation, in the fearful malice of the Jews, stirring up a whole world against CHRIST's messengers,¹ in the mediæval contempt and scorn, and the Blood resting ever in wrath upon Israel according to their own imprecation,—the same answer is repeated and re-echoed.

Pass on. The antitype of that desolation approaches; the end of all things is at hand. Behold a time of civilization and enlightenment. "Many are running to and fro, and knowledge is increased."² Wonderful

¹ Justin Martyr.

² See Dan. x. 4.

secrets are discovered. Creation reveals its hidden mysteries, for the comfort and luxury of mankind. Peace mantles earth ; plenty crowns the nations with abundance and luxury. The Gospel is preached unto every land. A flood of light is diffused over the world. Philanthropy, civilization, science, Christianity, seem to have extended themselves over the globe, and to have converted it into a Paradise. "Nevertheless, when the Son of Man cometh, will He find faith upon the earth?"¹ There will be "scoffers" in those days.² Antichrist is there ; the Man of Sin is revealed.

The question will be there, and how terribly ! And what will be the answer ? It will be in earth burning, the heavens shrivelling like a scroll, the sun black as sackcloth, the moon red as blood, the stars falling, the archangel's trumpet blowing, God shouting, the dead, small and great, arising from their graves ; all faces gathering blackness, all the tribes of the earth wailing, in the universal judgment, in the tremendous division, in the vengeance of the LORD, in the Lamb's wrath.

It is put by seers, prophets, martyrs, apostles. But it is not their question. It is the question of the Living GOD, of the FATHER, of the SON, of the HOLY GHOST. They are the speakers who send their Word over the whole world, saying in every generation, and in every place, in Christendom and heathendom, in city and wilderness, in palace and hut, in the ear of youth and age, righteousness and wickedness, "Who hath believed Our Report ?"

If we listen to a man's question, should we not listen to GOD's ? if to a great man's, a king's, an

¹ S. Luke xviii. 8.

² See 2 S. Pet. iii. 3.

emperor's, if to a wise man's, a statesman's, a philosopher's, if to a relative's, a friend's, how much more should we listen to Him Who is alone Great, LORD of lords, and King of kings, the Governor of the universe, the Only Wise, the One Wisdom, the One Good, the Only True Friend, and "Lover of souls!"

Consider also the way in which He has addressed us. He sent messengers before Him to proclaim the question, "rising early and sending them." He attested their mission by numberless signs and wonders, and certified it by the "more sure word of prophecy."

When all seemed unavailing, He sent His Own SON, the "heir of all things." By Him the Questioner came Himself manifest in the flesh; by His Incarnation, His Presence, to force the question, on His unwilling creatures, His rebellious people. He came to them in the most touching and solemn way, and spake to them plainly from the FATHER, and proposed in language like sunbeams the question which had been from eternity in the mysterious intercommunion of the ever blessed TRINITY. The FATHER, the WORD, the SPIRIT spoke by Him.

And when the world, and His own peculiar people would not hearken to Him, He laid down His life, "He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross," that He might address us by His death, speak to us by His Blood, repeat the question to us in more awful and affecting accents in the solemn utterance of death. He hung it with Himself upon the Cross, that none might be able to pass it by unregarded. He preached it by

His crucifixion, rather than that it should not be heard. He attested its importance by His Passion, rather than suffer us to despise it, or make light of it.

The Blood then of His SON is that in which GOD has written down this question for the consideration and attention of a redeemed world.

Surely we ought to see and hear it everywhere and always, on the world without, in our chambers within, on the walls of our houses, on the countenances of our friends, in every change and chance of this mortal life, in joy and in sorrow, health, sickness, society, solitude, on the porch of every Church, in every ordinance and Sacrament, we should see and hear that question traced and uttered in the awful but glorious colours and tones of the SAVIOUR'S Blood. We should always discern wherever we are, and whatever we are doing, His pale, dying, thorn-crowned Form speaking from His Cross, and asking the solemn question over all the world and through all time, "Is it nothing to all you who pass by?"

CHAPTER II.

“Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?”—Isa. liii. 1.

THE question has two elements of greatness. The Asker is Great, for He is the Living GOD, and the number to whom it is addressed is great, viz. all mankind. Is the meaning of the question great also? What is implied in its form? This awful truth is implied—that many do not believe, that so few believe, as to be almost lost among the multitude of unbelievers.

It is a truth declared in countless prophecies and statements of Holy Writ. “The wicked doth compass about the righteous, therefore wrong judgment proceedeth.”¹ “Many are called, but few chosen.” “Wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth unto death, and many there be that go in thereat.”

Though the report is GOD’S, few say Amen to it, so few as to be well-nigh none.

Look at all the warning records of Scripture, and of history. When the question came in the deluge, the only Amen was in the Ark floating upon the drowning waters, with one family out of all mankind.

When the question was heard amidst the flames of

¹ Hab. i. 4.

Sodom, the only evidence of belief was the single form of Lot staggering in horror between his daughters toward the little refuge of Zoar. When it swelled up from the embers of Jerusalem and the Temple, there was heard in Pella a solitary psalm of mingled humiliation and thanksgiving, triumph and tears, grief and joy. The little fugitive band, the Christian remnant of election were uttering their Amen over the unbelief of their nation.

For there is a remnant always, but a remnant only, a remnant which cannot perish, but which through the multitude of the ungodly, and the triumphing of the wicked, may be almost invisible, perhaps invisible altogether to the eyes of prophets and even angels—but always visible to the Eye of CHRIST and GOD.

The remnant may increase and multiply, or it may dwindle to a spot or speck, to the seven thousand in Israel during Ahab's reign, to the eight within the Ark, the three rescued out of Sodom, yet it cannot fail. Heaven and all its armies, the word and truth of FATHER, SON, and HOLY SPIRIT, are pledged to its preservation. Empires and thrones may crumble into dust—persecution shed seas of blood—the gates of hell vomit all their torrents of darkness—creation crash and dissolve; but the remnant cannot fail; its power of propagating and renewing itself can never cease.

“This is My covenant with them, saith the LORD, My SPIRIT that is upon thee, and My words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of

the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the LORD, from henceforth and for ever."¹

Still the remnant is in general so small in comparison with the wicked world in which it is hid ; it is so quiet and silent, so humble, meek, and unearthly, so absolutely not of the world, so unintelligible to the men of the world, that it may be passed over by the careless observer. It may be altogether lost in any particular spot or country, reappearing it may be far away, and in unexpected localities ;² and even on a view of the whole world it may be so fearfully diminished, so lamentably reduced, as to be imperceptible even to spiritual eyes, at least in hours of darkness and vexation. It may come so low, that even GOD, although He surely sees it, may, as it were, weep over its extinction as He wept over Jerusalem and the Jewish nation, though the remnant was there, and lament, as if despairing, over man's utter apostasy, and ask, as if all were lost, "Who hath believed our report?" as if there were not one.

This thought, this awful Scripture doctrine, the "fewness of the elect," from the reception of which we recoil in natural terror, adds certainly unspeakable weight to the question which implies it.

There were no more touching evidences of the SAVIOUR'S love, or warnings of the certainty of His judgments, than those His tears over guilty and apos-

¹ Isa. lix. 21.

² Videtur (sc. Ecclesia) sicut luna deficere, sed non deficit. Obumbrari potest, deficere non potest, quia aliquorum quidem in persecutionibus discessione minuitur, ut martyrum confessionibus impleatur.—S. Amb. Hexaëm. iv. 2.

tate Israel. And what words in Holy Scripture are sadder in their unutterable tenderness, or sterner in their unfathomable graciousness, than these words in the intercommunion of the ever-blessed Trinity, implying that notwithstanding the report was *Theirs*, notwithstanding their desire that all should accept it, notwithstanding One of them had laid down His Life to enforce it on men, so very few in comparison would accept it, that they might speak as if there were none, none who would believe, none who would be saved by it.

Yet what is the report, spoken of by the prophet, which GOD appropriates to Himself, which the Three Persons of the HOLY TRINITY deign to call “our report?” S. John points it out, the Words of JESUS.¹ S. Paul declares it, it is the Gospel.² This is another truth which lends new and immeasurable force to the great question—that there are comparatively very few who can give a satisfactory answer.

But what is the signification of the question? What does it mean?

Who hath believed our report, and to whom is the Arm of the LORD revealed?

The report is the Gospel: the effect of receiving it salvation. The Arm of the LORD is JESUS CHRIST His SON and Word. Its revelation is eternal life, for “this is life eternal to know Thee the only True GOD and JESUS CHRIST Whom Thou hast sent.”³ The consequence of rejecting the report is damnation. The want of that revelation is eternal death. For “he that believeth on the SON hath everlasting life,

¹ S. John xii. 37, 38. ² Rom. x. 16. ³ S. John xvii. 3.

and he that believeth not the SON shall not see life, but the wrath of GOD abideth on him.¹ Let us study these terms.

1. The Gospel is good tidings, "good tidings of great joy brought to all people," offered to all freely "without money and without price." The particulars of the message will come before us one by one in our meditations on the following verses.

But of its importance there can be no doubt. It is "life and immortality brought to light." It is "the glorious Gospel of the blessed GOD." It is the "ministration of the SPIRIT," and of "righteousness." It "exceeds in glory," so that "even that which was glorious, hath no glory in this respect by reason of the glory which excelleth." It is the light of GOD inshining in our hearts "to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of GOD in the face of JESUS CHRIST." It is the removal of the veil from the face of Moses, the bright interpretation of GOD's holy law. It is the ministry of reconciliation, wealth for the poor, health for the sick, comfort for the broken hearted, deliverance for the captive, recovery of sight to the blind, liberty for the bruised, even "the glorious liberty of the children of GOD." It unveils the "mystery of godliness without controversy great," even "GOD manifest in the flesh." It announces to those who sat in darkness and the shadow of death One Who "of GOD is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, sanctification and redemption." It offers us His indwelling Presence, by which it assures us of every consolation here, of every blessing hereafter.

¹ S. John iii. 36.

It flings open the gates of heaven, and points to all the glories, happiness and joys which are stored up there for the children of GOD. Yea, it points to the Living GOD in His Eternal Majesty, and offers all these things to us in Him, even those good things which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man.

On the other hand it certainly unveils the wrath of GOD. It points to "the worm which dieth not, and the fire which is not quenched," the outer darkness, the weeping and wailing, the endless remorse, horror, despair. It brings distinctly before us the immortality of the soul, the resurrection of the body, the perfection of righteousness and bliss, the completion of sin and torments. It is announced by GOD. It is written in CHRIST'S Blood. It is sealed with the HOLY SPIRIT. It is put into the Church's lips for ever. Then it is the "savour of life unto life," or "death unto death." On believing it hangs salvation, on rejecting it damnation.

Therein also is the righteousness of GOD revealed from faith to faith, as "it is written, the just shall live by his faith." Hence the question "who hath believed our report?" is completed by that addition "to whom is the Arm of the LORD revealed?" For the Arm of the LORD is JESUS,¹ and the life of faith is the revelation of JESUS to the soul; the inshining of the glorious Gospel; His indwelling and illuminating Presence, rooting and grounding us in love. For who can look upon Him revealed thus in His Gospel

¹ *Dextera Dei Christus est.* S. Amb. *De Off. Min.* iii. 15. Cf. S. Aug. iv. 484, 894, 1146, 1444.

glory within us, and not name Him with the Scripture "the Chiefest among ten thousand, altogether lovely." "Thy lips drop as the honeycomb." Belief without the abiding Presence of JESUS pines and dies. It becomes dead, more dead than death itself. It becomes a practical apostasy, a "holding the truth in unrighteousness," which is worse than common sin, ensuring damnation. But the *abiding* Presence keeps faith alive, which is therefore a continual revelation of "CHRIST in us," absorbing us more and more till He becomes "all in all," and we cry out, "There is none beside Thee."

And He is revealed to us as the LORD'S Arm—that is, as that Almighty Word, co-eternal and of one substance with Him, by Whom He "spread out the heavens like a curtain and laid the foundations of the earth," by Whom He accomplishes all works of creation and redemption, mercy and judgment, election and reprobation, and to Whom incarnate, humbled and exalted He hath given all power in heaven and earth. For from eternity He was in the bosom of the FATHER; and before Time was, or creation appeared, He was One with Him in the unity of the HOLY SPIRIT. In creation all things were made by Him, and in making them He revealed Himself to His heavenly creatures "when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of GOD shouted for joy;"¹ for He formed the innumerable company of angels, and all the blessed orders of celestial spirits, angels, archangels, virtues, principalities, powers, dominations, thrones, cherubim, seraphim.² He was the Life and

¹ Job xxxviii. 7. ² See Note to Hooker. Keble's edition.

wisdom, and salvation of the elect among them, knitting them by His SPIRIT in eternal love to Himself and to the FATHER. He disposed them all in their places, and assigned them their several duties and operations. When Satan and his apostate followers rebelled, He withdrew from them their brightness, their beauty, their glory, and cast them like lightning out of heaven.

He framed all those heavens in their excellency where He manifests His Presence in glory, and fills all the adoring host with infinite beatitude. He made also the abyss of hell, and all the torments which are in it. He extended the sky "like a molten looking-glass," and poised the world upon its balance. He formed man out of the dust of earth, and "made of one blood all the nations under heaven." He linked all mankind together by that marvellous law which constitutes them one family, so that they derive the same being and nature from one another through successive generations.

And He revealed Himself to man in Eden as his Creator, Governor, Preserver.

Then man gave Him another work to do. When man sinned the Arm of the LORD cast him out of Paradise. He waved the sword of His sentence over his race, and "death passed upon all men." Then the vision of GOD was withdrawn. Sin came between man and his Maker. The image of GOD was marred in him, and the likeness of GOD departed from him.¹ By transgression the will was corrupted in which that Image consisted, and holy love which was the likeness

¹ S. Aug. i. 640.

fled from a polluted world. When holiness departed, and love fled, the knowledge of GOD was lost, the Arm of the LORD was hidden, concealed from the heart of poor rebellious mankind.

But it did not let go of him altogether, neither did it hide itself for ever from him. In the promise of Eden it took hold of Adam's soul by his repentance. In the anticipated and expected coming of this day, He grasped soul after soul, drew them one by one out of the mass of corruption and death, upheld them, renewed them, assured them of His presence, promised them promises, showed Himself to them afar off, and yet drawing near in due time to execute all His gracious purposes concerning them.

In the fulness of time He was *revealed*,—revealed by veiling Himself. The Arm of the LORD came visibly into the world, to interfere with its headlong course of sin and ruin. "GOD was manifest in the flesh." In JESUS, the Arm of the LORD was made bare before the eyes of men ; made bare in the "form of a servant," in flesh and blood, in miracles, in preaching, in suffering. This revelation, however, was only transient. An eclipse came over its light ; the veil of death folded it. It was, however, but for a little while. "A little while, and ye shall not see Me ; and again a little while, and ye shall see Me."¹

The eclipse passed. "The Sun of righteousness" rose again ; and the revelation was renewed, and renewed in might, in incorruption, and glory, by the re-appearance of the Risen LORD, "shown to be the SON of GOD, with power by the resurrection from the

¹ S. John xvi. 16.

dead." The Arm of the LORD was seen, as Isaiah had described it, red with the blood of His enemies,¹ travelling in the greatness of its strength, having abolished death, bruised the devil's head, burst the chains of hell, opened the gates of the grave, flashing out majesty and victory, bringing forth the "prisoners of hope," and exalting them with Himself to Paradise.

This, however, was still only a transient revelation, a forty days' wonder of momentary appearances amongst chosen witnesses. He went to the FATHER. Then came another, a better, a fuller, a more abiding revelation. Pentecost arrived; the Arm of the LORD was again lifted up, again made bare. It was no longer revealed without them; it was now within them, and revealed within them. They saw the SAVIOUR in His Risen Majesty, in His resurrection strength within them, in their hearts, wielding all the powers of their mind, casting out fear, backwardness, presumption, vanity, illuminating their understandings, purging their consciences, strengthening their faith, confirming their hope, inflaming their love, making them mighty through GOD to the pulling down of strongholds, casting them out over the world to be its teachers and conquerors.

Once more the Arm of the LORD was revealed to them in a still dearer and lovelier aspect, taking them up individually, gathering them one by one into the number of His elect, showing Himself in their purged conscience, manifesting Himself as love in their love. They saw and felt that Arm lifting them, cleansing them, cheering them, consoling them, soothing their

¹ Isa. lx.

pains, stanching their wounds, carrying them in their weariness, leading them gently as they "travailed" with their brethren's salvation, laying them in His bosom, withdrawing every veil between them and the glory of GOD in the face of JESUS, disclosing Himself to them, as One to Whom they might safely commit their souls, wiping their tears, dispelling their terrors, entering into their temptations, raising them from their falls, guarding them from their enemies, turning their torments into pleasures, their exhaustion into ease, their prisons into porches of heaven, their death into the assurance of life; making them more than conquerors by this continual revelation of His abiding presence with them, and in them, brightening more and more unto the perfect day.

There is yet another and a future revelation, when the Arm of the LORD shall accomplish its last work. To all this His present work is preparatory. All time and all creation are but the field in which He is conducting the mystery of godliness, and overruling the mystery of iniquity towards the "expected end," in which He shall finally be manifested. "Behold, I make all things new!" And His appearance will be their renovation. All things will be renewed by the Arm of the LORD. There will be a new creation, a new heaven, a new earth, without sea and without change; new wine, new joy, new songs, new life, a new city, even new Jerusalem; new darkness, also, and new pangs,—the outer darkness, the pang of endless separation from the LORD's Arm.

This is the last revelation yet to come. In our "flesh shall we see GOD." "Our GOD shall come,

and not keep silence." "Every knee shall bow" to Him, and "every tongue confess" to Him, and "every eye see" Him. "The LORD JESUS shall be revealed in flaming fire with His mighty angels, to take vengeance on them that know not GOD, and obey not" His Gospel. "Heaven and earth flee away" from His face; every eye meets His. "All faces gather blackness," "all the tribes of the earth wail." That will be the last lifting up of GOD's Arm, which now is saving His elect, and blinding the reprobate amidst the mysteries of time; to unfold all mysteries, to expose all secrets, to accomplish the great separation, to part asunder the sheep and the goats, the saved and the lost; to cast death, and hell, and Satan, and all fallen spirits, and all the damned, into the lake of fire, which burneth with brimstone, which is the second death, and to fold all His elect in His eternal embrace of love, and carry them into His FATHER's house, where they shall see His face,—see Him as they are seen, know Him as they are known; when, having accomplished all the will of GOD, and subjected every enemy, the LORD shall conclude His mediatorial dispensation, and the SON also Himself, according to His manhood, shall be subject unto Him, that "GOD may be all in all,"—all things in all His creatures.

"Who hath believed our report, and to whom is the Arm of the LORD revealed?" It is a great question in every respect; from the Majesty of Him Who asks it, from the number to whom it is addressed, from the weight and grandeur of the subject, and from the necessity of answering it. For this remains to be said, that we must answer it,—that we must give a reply.

We should put it to ourselves now, or it will be put to us in the judgment-day. "Have I believed the report? has the Arm of the LORD been revealed to me?" For faith is an individual act; the revelation is between our soul and CHRIST. The faith which does not appropriate that report, nor lead onward into that revelation of JESUS, will not profit us. Faith accepts the report. It opens the eyes to the unseen; it is therefore a gift of GOD. It is not merely the assent of the understanding; nor is it properly a trust. The understanding may agree, and yet our knowledge be fruitless. Trust springs from our feelings, and they may be deceived. Faith is a spiritual illumination, "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen," the reception of JESUS, GOD's wisdom, into our hearts, the Arm of the LORD opening to us the gates of the invisible world. To believe the report, is to look upon the objects of that world as substantial and real, and therefore all-important.

But when the soul goes, the body is dead. It may keep its warmth for hours, but it is dead. So, if faith does not advance to faith, does not increase until it is an abiding revelation of JESUS, as creating, redeeming, delivering, saving, judging, blessing,—if it does not purify the heart, that it may see GOD, it will die; rather, it is already dead. And it is a fearful thing to deprive faith of life, to kill faith, to turn it into a cold lifeless form; for what is it, but to hold the truth in unrighteousness? which they who do shall be damned. It is to fulfil those dread sentences of Scripture, which we dare scarcely think of; to join in that sin of Scribes

and Pharisees,¹ which could not be forgiven ; to deny our SAVIOUR'S preciousness, and the glory of His Divinity ; to despise the SON of GOD ; to crown Him with thorns, and spit at Him ; to condemn Him, and crucify Him in our hearts, that He may no more trouble us. It is to destroy our own souls, and ruin that which CHRIST has made part of Himself, which He has consecrated for a temple and habitation of GOD by the SPIRIT.

Thus, without the abiding revelation of JESUS, our faith must decay and die. For faith is given us to lead us on to faith,—to another clearer and higher degree of faith ; from a faint and trembling apprehension of the Cross of JESUS, and of all the mysteries and glories which surround it, and of the eternal mercies and judgments which it declares, to a distinct and continual perception of all the glorious truths which it reveals ; to what the Scriptures name a “ conversation in heaven,”—the tranquil consciousness of CHRIST'S indwelling presence now, and the perfect and unclouded vision of His Countenance hereafter.

If faith stops short, love must depart from it, and all its functions are arrested ; and as, when the heart can no more perform its office, the whole life-blood stagnates, and lethargy and death ensue, so, when the operation of love is gone, faith is of necessity reduced to a torpor, in which, if it remain, it must die. If faith is satisfied with once beholding, and takes no steps to attain the objects which it beholds, it grows used to

¹ See the treatise of S. Athanasius on the words “ Whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of Man,” &c.—Opp. Vol. ii. 975, &c.

them, and grows used also to make light of them ; they move it no more than a picture. A picture may perfectly resemble a beloved friend, whom we have lost. For a season after our bereavement it may stir us even to tears ; presently we become accustomed to its appearance in our chamber. There are the features, the eyes, the aspect, the hues, the form, the countenance ; we saw in them, when it was first set in its place, a moving memorial of one who was as the "sight of our eyes." But there is no life ; it has no reality ; it is not our beloved. After the lapse of a little time, we are no more moved by it.

The revelation of faith is at first scarcely more than the vision of a picture. It brings before us for a season Him Whom we had lost ; the SAVIOUR, in the beauty of His mercy, and the terrors of His holiness. We look at His purity, His compassion, His tenderness, His love ; all the features of His character, as embodied in the Gospel. We admire them, speak of them, praise them ; that is not enough : our admiration may be lifeless. Those who have not the least love of CHRIST, may yet commend His qualities as a matter of taste and sentiment. We perhaps go further. Our consciences are convicted ; our feelings are aroused. We exclaim, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man ;" or we descant on His loveliness, and rejoice in His compassion.

If this is all, it is not enough. We shall grow accustomed to the truths of the Gospel, to its holy doctrines, its heart-searching precepts, its awful threatenings, its glorious promises. They moved us, stirred us at the first. The SAVIOUR'S wounds, blood, agony,

death, His Resurrection and Ascension, His tender intercession, His merciful pleading for us,—we thought that we should never forget them.

But they require of you *steps*; steps of faith, immediate acts, steps in a new and holy way of life, steps in the tracks of our pilgrim forefathers. You are called to go nearer to the Object which you regard,—nearer and nearer, till you reach Him; but you stop. You have no purpose to take the steps which He demands; you stand still. It is but a picture; a picture painted on the imagination, a picture contemplated by the understanding, a pictured form in a pictured scene, which need have nothing more than our admiration or our regret, which asks no active service of love. Presently you grow used to it, and unconcerned about it. You act without awe, without fear, without reverence, without restraint, before it; you care no more for it than for a coloured canvas; your faith is dead.

Let us, then, ask ourselves GOD'S question. Have I believed the report? Is the Arm of the LORD revealed to me?

Have I received the Gospel of JESUS CHRIST the SON of GOD? Is He revealed as the LORD'S Arm affecting me, held up before me in warning, stretched out to me in mercy, revealed as always holding me, sometimes vehemently drawing me away from temptation, sometimes tenderly carrying and cherishing me, cleansing my defilements, wiping my tears, soothing my pains, smiting sometimes and correcting me, then binding up the wounds which He has inflicted, pouring in oil and wine, bearing me onward toward death, lifting up my eyes toward eternity?

Has the picture taken life? Is it a real JESUS, or only a painted one, that I believe in? with a real heaven and a real hell, or only such a face as Raphael may have painted, and such a vision of judgment as Michael Angelo has designed? Is it a real, living Arm which has been made known to me? One on which I really lean, Whose stripes I really fear, Whose tenderness really refreshes me? One Whose Almighty strength I really acknowledge? One by which I can and do accomplish all things?

Have I believed Your report, O holy and blessed TRINITY? Is Thy Arm, O GOD, revealed to me?

Thou askest not if I am rich, or if I am wise, or if I am great, or if I am learned, or if I am prospering, or if I am a king; Thou askest not if I have lived ten or a hundred years; Thou askest not if I have written books, or taken cities, or conquered empires, or found out inventions, or "been called a benefactor" of mankind; Thou askest not if I have been an eloquent preacher, a distinguished minister, or a true prophet, "famous in the congregation, a man of renown." Thou askest, Hast thou believed Our report? Is the Arm of the LORD revealed to thee?

All other questions are of no moment. If any man asks me anything, it would be rude not to reply. Shall I make no answer when Thou askest me? Can any questioner be compared with FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST? can any question be asked so solemnly? can any question be so comprehensive, and of such weighty import?

And now at this time, out of Thy Word, in the quietude and silence of our hearts, Thy still small

voice asks us one by one this great question. This report is GOD'S. This arm was made flesh ; this Arm was nailed to the Cross ; this Arm is now lifted before the Eternal FATHER ; this Arm has preserved me hitherto ; this Arm would embrace, and save me for ever. Have I believed ? Is it revealed to me ?

It is a question to be answered. "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the *faith* ; prove your own selves."

"LORD, when Thine Arm is lifted up, they will not see ; but they shall see." Make me, I beseech Thee, constrain me, if need be scourge me, that I may look unto it, and be saved, lest it "fall upon" me and "grind me to powder."

CHAPTER III.

“He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground.”—Isa. liii. 2.

How comes it to pass that the great question must be asked, in such solemn and startling accents, of all the generations of mankind? Gifted as man has been with reason and understanding, it would have seemed natural that this report should occupy his attention, and that he should never cease to contemplate the glorious Arm which created him.

But man could not act up to his proper nature; he had forfeited its powers. Original, developed into actual, sin had deprived him of them. It stopped his ears, and blinded his eyes, so that he could neither receive the report, nor see the revelation. Mankind had grown weak; he had been dried up. A great withering had fallen upon the earth, and therefore the SAVIOUR had to grow up before GOD as a tender plant, and a root out of a dry ground.

Under this image of withering, the operation of sin is set before us. “GOD saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good.” The garden of Eden was man’s dwelling, a Paradise beautiful and fresh, full of rivers, trees and shade, flowers, fruits, light, life. The ground brought forth spontaneously its

teeming and manifold abundance. The animal creation, so strangely near and similar to, and yet so distinct from man, and so mysteriously linked and bound up with man—its master whether for good or evil, weal or woe, had received its fitting place, sustenance, and province in the common blessedness.

Man, finally, with his partner, the help meet for him, whom GOD found, was created in GOD'S image, and endowed with His likeness. He was full of life, innocence, wisdom, glory, majesty, all were his; he was immortal in body and soul. He was not liable to decay, corruption, sickness, pain, sorrow, or death.

In him also was all mankind. As the oak is in the acorn, the vine in the grape-stone, the harvest in the corn of wheat, so all the generations of the elect were in him. "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth," was the commandment, with living descendants like yourselves, immortal, beautiful, innocent, majestic, holy, glorious images of you, and so images of GOD, arrayed with your likeness and resemblance to your Maker; clear in mind, pure in conscience, undefiled in conversation, with one heart and one speech, united in one holy bond of brotherhood and love, visited by angels, seeing GOD.

Such was mankind in GOD'S purpose, as contained in Adam before the fall;¹ such their dwelling-place, and such their life on earth until, after a due time of

¹ Εἰς τὸν ἑαυτοῦ γὰρ παράδεισον αὐτοὺς εἰσαγάγων, ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς νόμον· ἵνα εἰ μὲν φυλάττειεν τὴν χάριν, καὶ μένοιεν καλοὶ, ἔχωσι τὴν ἐν παραδείσῳ ἄλυστον καὶ ἀνώδινον καὶ ἀμέριμνον ζωὴν, πρὸς τῷ καὶ τῆς ἐν οὐρανοῖς ἀφθαρσίας αὐτοὺς τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν ἔχειν.—S. Athan. De Incarn. Verbi Dei. Vol. i. p. 56.

sojourn here, they should, without pain and without death, experience a change, and be "clothed upon with immortality,"¹ and be exalted to heaven, and pass from the outer to the inner court of God's house; and, rising up like sweet odours ascending heavenward, enter into His more manifest presence, be secured from all future falling and temptation, and worship with angels the Eternal TRINITY.

Adam's offspring, then, would have been, as it seems, commensurate with the number of the elect,² and would thus have passed through a blessed life on earth, to a far more blessed life in heaven.

The first man was therefore, in GOD'S purpose, before the fall, a tree of life, bearing all future generations, rooted in GOD'S grace, branching out into manifold stems, covered with fair leaves, and pure blossoms, and abundant fruit, to be rendered to the LORD in due season. The animals around him were blessed for his sake. The ground on which he stood was blessed for his sake; blessed with every gift of plenty, delight, and beauty; the earth all one Eden for the habitation of mankind, who should thus be "blessed in the city, and the field; blessed in the fruit of his body, and the fruit of his cattle, the increase of his kine, and flocks of sheep; blessed in his basket, and his store; blessed in his going out, and coming

¹ S. Augustine, i. 601; x. 933 and 110; iii. 397; vi. 281; x. 1597; vii. 377, &c. S. Anslem, *Cur Deus homo*, i. 18.

² S. Anslem, *ibid.* lib. i., who with many Fathers considers the number of the elect intended to supply the place of the fallen Angels. See S. Augustine, vi. 246, and Hilary, *Comment. on S. Matth.* xviii. 6. See Milton, *Par. Lost*.

in." GOD saw everything that He had made, and behold it was very good.

But He must "grow up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground." A second Adam was needed ; for there came the withering. A blight passed over this fair tree of GOD's planting ; a blight smote it at the root, sharp, sudden, deadly. Root, trunk, stem, branches, leaves, fruits, flowers,—the whole race from first to last felt this blight ; all *withered* beneath its breath. The devil came and breathed on mankind, and mankind took in the poisonous air, and it went at once to his heart. In Adam, the root of mankind corrupted itself,¹ and became unclean ; and from the root the whole tree received the fatal taint of sin.²

Its blight passed over mankind. It touched the animal world. It fell upon the ground ; it extended over earth ; it spread around over all the visible creation, sullyng, "subjecting to vanity, withering, introducing disorder, confusion, decay, death. It even defiled the heavens, which now are. The sentence of dissolution was passed upon the universe !"³

¹ Non invenitur homo qui præter Adam carnaliter generetur. Illi quidem generationi sufficit unius delicti connexio. And again : Nemo est in illâ generatione præter Adam.—S. Aug. Ep. 157. c. 3. Cf. Ep. 186.

² Cf. S. Aug. iv. 1549.

³ Creatura enim subjecta est vanitati, et cadente homine, quem constituerat Dominus dominum domûs suæ, et principem omnis possessionis suæ ; tota simul hæreditas corrupta est. Inde distemperatus aer, terra in operibus Adæ maledicta, et omnia subdita vanitati.—S. Bern. Serm. in Vig. Nat. Dom. ii. 4. Vol. ii. p. 1713. Cf. S. Athan. de S. Matth. xi. Vol. i. p. 150.

There is nothing¹ more mysterious and yet more certain from Scripture and from experience than this doctrine of original sin thus inlaying and operating everywhere. The connexion also between sin and death is equally palpable and equally extensive. In Adam all sinned ; and “in Adam all died.” “Through the offence of one many became dead.” “The judgment was by one to condemnation ;” and “by one man’s offence death reigned by one,” when by “one man’s disobedience many were made sinners,” sin reigned unto death, over all mankind, over the world, over this heaven and earth which now are.

By sin death became a king,² and got him a dominion, pale, hideous, terrible. He put a crown on his head, he took a sceptre in his hand, and his crown was our guilt, and his sceptre our sentence, and his kingdom the world. He clothed himself with terrors, and he made himself a palace of mankind, and he set up his throne and it was greatly established in our universal decay, and the whole ground became his field, one great burying place, a vast Aceldama “enlarging itself without measure.”

Wherever sin reached, death reached ; and wherever sin advanced, he advanced with equal strides.³ Wherever he extended his dominion decay and dissolution entered, and wherever he smote with his sceptre

¹ Pensées de Pascal. Art. iv. p. 2.

² Bishop Andrewes’ Serm. Vol. ii. p. 193. S. August. vii. 403.

³ Διὰ δὴ ταῦτα πλεῖον τοῦ θανάτου κρατήσαντος, καὶ τῆς φθορᾶς παραμενούσης κατὰ τῶν ἀνθρώπων, τὸ μὲν τῶν ἀνθρώπων γένος ἐφθείρετο, ὁ δὲ λογικὸς καὶ κατ’ εἰκόνα γενόμενος ἄνθρωπος ἠφανίζετο. —S. Ath. De Inc. Verbi Dei. Vol. i. p. 58.

confusion and discord started up, and all went out of tune and out of time ; and “the conception of our mother Eve was greatly multiplied,” and in sorrow she brought forth children, children of sin, children of sorrow, children of shame, “children of death,” children who should propagate their race,¹ but propagate it for destruction, the earthly Adam reappearing without ceasing, the offspring of our first parents, but of these continually reproducing themselves as they had become, fallen, ruined, lost, the citizens and subjects of the great monarch Death.

For in Adam all sinned. The Father of all men sinned, and all his family sinned in him, for “who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one.” They sinned in him, so as to have derived from him the same sinfulness which he had contracted. The root of our race corrupted himself, and corrupted our nature in himself, corrupted the whole trunk, and every branch, every leaf, every blossom, every fruit. The poison which he drew in from the lips of Satan extended itself from him into the blood of all who came from him, since GOD “made of one blood all the nations of the earth.” In that poison is the power of death.

And thus “by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin.” By sin death entered into the world, into our soul and into our body, into our flesh and into our blood, into the very strong hold of our life, so that our life became death. “And so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned”²—rather death passed on into all men. It drew near to one man after another as soon as they were conceived in

¹ S. Aug. vii. 379.

² Rom. v. 12. *δὴλθεν εἰς πάντας.*

the womb.¹ It came up to them as soon as they were born into the world. And as soon as it approached them, as soon as it came up to them, it saw its mark upon them ! it saw the door into their nature which was opened by the fall, and which “no man could shut,” and it entered into every one of them through that open door of sin.

As death entered, each withered. The taint smote the individual. The poison rose in his veins. His life became death, and the blight extended not only to the whole race, but to the whole nature of each individual.² It blights soul and body, and all the powers and faculties of both. It blights the understanding, so that it can no longer discern the truth. It blights the affections so that they can no more lift themselves to God. It blights the conscience, that eye of God in the soul, so that it can no longer endure the true light, or preserve its lawful sway. It blights the desires, so that they can no longer keep themselves in their bounds. It blights the *will*, so that it loses all strength for good.

Beneath this blight the body also after a season loses its bloom and freshness, the hair its gloss, the form its shapeliness. The stature begins to stoop. Strength diminishes. Every member grows thinner and weaker. Suddenly or slowly the circulation stops. The functions of the animal frame cease. The

¹ Ἐξ ἀνθρώπων εἰς ἀνθρώπους ὁ θάνατος ἐκράτησεν.—S. Athan. p. 63.

² Oritur enim ex mortuo quisque antea peccatis aridus : et ab anterioris vitæ radice decisis nunc Eloquio Dei et sacramento Baptismi aquis spiritalibus reviviscit.—Hilar. Tract. in 136 Ps. 7.

soul is withdrawn from the body which it has mis-used. Then come decay, rottenness, the stench, the "worm crawling under, and the worm covering." Then "*pulveris exigui jactus*,"—a handful of dust amidst a heap of dust.

But "death is set against life." By the nature of sin death has a huge kingdom. There is an outer and inner court of the kingdom of heaven, and by the original creation of man, if he had continued in the grace of his creation, he would have passed from the outer court to the inner, out of a blessed life on earth, to a far higher and more blessed life in heaven.

Death in like manner hath a twofold kingdom; an outer and an inner court in his dreary palace.¹ There is a "second death."

Man having fallen under the dominion of death, must by the first death have passed through and from this life which is but the "shadow of death" into another, far more miserable and terrible condition, into the power and dominion of the second death.

Wheresoever sin goes, death accompanies it. As sin increases, death increases. As sin ripens, death prevails. When "sin is finished" it "brings forth death." When sin is persisted in, it becomes one with death, and filled with death produces the second death, the fulness of death. Sin yet upon its trial has the first death for its correction. Sin completed and sentenced has the second death for its penalty. For confirmed and condemned sin is incurable. Its penalty also is irremediable, beyond recovery, beyond mercy.

Thus the blight of original sin which passed on the

¹ S. Augustine, viii. 890; xii. 1171.

body and soul must have gone on continually wasting them. "The drought scorching them by day, and the frost by night," the fire of concupiscence consuming them in their youth, despair and horror freezing them in age, till smitten with Saul's perpetual trembling, they must have yielded themselves helplessly to the king of terrors, and then passed on into the more fearful kingdom of death behind the veil, a "great and terrible wilderness where are fiery serpents, and scorpions, and drought, where there is no water," not one drop to cool the tongue, where¹ the blood is as liquid fire, and the life as death, and the light utter darkness, and the voice blasphemy, and the companions fiends, and memory remorse, and expectation despair, and that which preserves in existence, the eternal and infinite wrath of God.

Then the next dispensation of God seemed only to augment the evil. The law was ordained, which if it had been possible, would have given righteousness and life out of death. But as the law could only try man without assisting him, there was neither help nor health in it. It only increased the withering.² For first it apprehended sin, and dragged it out into light, sentenced and condemned it. It showed the guilt of sin in distinct and appalling characters. It made it appear exceedingly sinful. Even as a straight rule applied to a crooked line discloses, and seems to multiply its crookedness, so did the holy and spiritual law of God applied to His peculiar people reveal with infinitely increased clearness the perversity of man's heart, for which it provided no remedy.

¹ See Jeremy Taylor, *Serm.*

² S. Augustine, v. 818.

2. The law meeting with that perversity heightened by its opposition the fire of concupiscence whence sin springs.¹ For it added to it that rebelliousness which rises in wrath against the laws which check it, and will taste unlawful pleasures merely because they are forbidden. And this was as the blast of the bellows to the furnace, kindling that concupiscence into a sevenfold heat.

3. The law also increased the terror and anguish of those whom it thus tried and condemned.² It showed them their miserable condition. It strengthened the voice of conscience till it grew like the wail of "the trumpet sounding long, and waxing louder and louder." It seemed always to be re-echoing the thunders of Sinai, and the curses of Ebal, in the self-convicted heart. As it fanned the flame of desire in the day of youth, so it augmented the frost of terror for the night of age and decay.

4. Because the corrupt nature of man fastened on the outward observances and ordinances in which the law was enveloped, and despised its spirit and its weighty matters, it only deepened the blindness and worldly presumption of those to whom it was given, and made them more insensible to the living voice of GOD, than the very heathen over whom they gloried.

For the Spirit indeed was in the law, but not in those to whom it was given. And the glory of GOD was on the face of Moses, but the veil was over it; and the meat of eternal life was in the ark, but engraved on tables of stone. And the Jews attending only to the naked letter pined away and died of fa-

¹ S. Augustine, vi. 103, 108, 353.

² S. Aug. x. 203.

mine.¹ Accordingly the law is named a "fiery law," blasting and blighting, through the sinfulness of man, those on whom it was imposed; the handwriting of ordinances against them, and contrary to them, a yoke which they could not bear, a bondage from which they sought, but could find no deliverance. The law therefore "made nothing perfect." On the contrary it only extended the dreadful kingdom of sin and death.

"Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate. The inhabitants of the earth are burned and few men left."

"Therefore hell hath enlarged herself and opened her mouth without measure, and their multitude, and their pomp, and he that rejoiceth shall descend into it."²

"And the streams thereof shall be turned into pitch, and the dust thereof into brimstone, and the land thereof shall become burning pitch."³

It was certainly a great withering, great (1) because of the bloom and life which it destroyed, (2) because of the grandeur of the creature whom it so reduced, (3) because of its universal extent to all men, (4) because of its thorough destruction of each individual, (5) because of its interminable illimitable anguish. So dry a ground had the world and mankind, and each man from Adam to the LORD'S coming, become of necessity through man's fall, if there had been no remedy devised by the free grace of GOD, no new and tender plant, no other root provided in the eternal counsels of Almighty Love.

¹ Ἰουδαῖοι μὲν ψιλῇ τῇ γράμματι προσέχοντες ἐλιμοκτονόθησαν.
—S. Athan. Vol. i. p. 989.

² Isa. v. 14.

³ Isa. xxxiv. 9.

Would you gain a feeble notion of this drought, look at the Scripture record of the world before the Flood, or of Sodom and Gomorrah "suffering the vengeance of eternal fire," or on the history of Jerusalem during the Roman siege, the type of the world's state hereafter at the last dreadful advent of the Lamb. Or study the accounts of penal settlements in times past; where men have had the man's heart taken out, and a beast's heart given them instead; where they call for death and it will not come; where they have had a foretaste of Gehenna tormenting and being tormented. Such also from the accounts of Scripture¹ seems to have been the general condition of the whole world, of Gentile and Jew, when the tender plant sprang up. Look also at any withering of your own hearts which you may have experienced, at the worst state of sorrow, or of horror through which you have passed. Imagine that multiplied immeasurably and extended infinitely, and judge what we should have been if left to ourselves.

For "we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags, and we all do fade as a leaf, and our iniquities like the wind have taken us away."²

So dry, O LORD, was the world, and so dry was man, when Thou camest into him. Thus must he have withered for ever if Thou hadst not visited him.

"Can these dry bones live?" "O LORD, Thou knowest."³ Yes, Thou knowest. They can live. Thou hast for this great withering an even greater revival.

¹ Rom. i. Cf. Cyprian. de Gratiâ Dei, c. 8—10.

² Isa. lxiv. 6.

³ Ezek. xxxvii. 3.

CHAPTER IV.

“ He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground.”—Isa. liii. 2.

FOR so grievous a fall, a wonderful resurrection was necessary.¹ The true Life alone could overcome death in death's own dominion. Nothing less than a fountain of living waters could revive such a wilderness. As the ancient world was thus thoroughly “decaying, and waxing old, and ready to vanish away,” a new principle of vitality was required to regenerate it. As the dominion of death had extended as far as sin; as sin and death could not be separated; as the fatal blight had begun at the root, and spread itself through the whole trunk and all the branches of mankind; as the poisonous leaven was in each individual's soul and body, in the mind, the understanding, the desires, the affections, the will, the flesh and blood of every man, it was needful that the cure should extend as far and penetrate as deep. As the ruin was so thorough and complete in its ultimate developement, it was needful that the recovery should be as entire and perfect in its final consummation. Sin and death were in the

¹ For this chapter I would refer in particular to the treatises of S. Athanasius on the Incarnation of GOD the Word; of S. Augustine, *Contra Julianum* (*Opus Imperfectum*); of S. Anselm's *Cur Deus homo*. To quote the exact words would load the page.

nature of man, and in the seed of man ; in the whole race, and in each individual.

The law of sin and death, as Scripture names it, the bondage of corruption, guilt and its consequences, was entwined round mankind, and on every member of Adam's family at their birth, and riveted upon them by actual transgression. Two things therefore were manifestly necessary.

1st. That the race or nature of man should be redeemed from the dominion of sin and death, from the sentence and penalty of guilt.

2ndly. That the life and renewal should then be imparted to each separate individual ; that as death had the "power"¹ of propagating and reproducing itself in every one born of woman, so life should have the power of propagating and reproducing itself in and from one individual and one generation to another.

Where could such life be found—a life which of necessity could master death? Where sprang there such a fountain of living waters which could revive this withered stock? Sin being infinite in guilt, and the punishment of sin infinite in duration, and the death resulting from sin infinite in extent and duration, where was the power which could discharge that debt of guilt, or endure that severity of punishment, or expel that spreading and endlessly encroaching death?

It was not to be found on earth, for that was subject to vanity. It was not to be found among men, for they were already in that death. It was not to be found amongst angels, for they stand by grace ; they

¹ ἐξουσία.

need themselves that power to preserve them in the life which it has bestowed upon them. No creature could meet those infinite requirements, for all creatures are finite. Where could the remedy be discovered? GOD found it in His own bosom. There was One to Whom, by Eternal generation, the FATHER hath given to have life in Himself, even as He hath life in Himself. It is one and the same life ; a life perfect and eternal ; a life all-sufficient and infinite ; a life which could discharge the debt of sin for all men ; a life which could endure the infinite severity of punishment ; a life which could extend itself as far, or farther, than death could do ; which, by its inexhaustible fulness, could drive out death universally, and for ever.

In the unfathomable wisdom and righteous determinations of infinite goodness and justice, it was decreed that this life should be introduced into the fallen nature and race of mankind, and applied to each individual believer separately, for his perfect and complete cure. These two requirements are met by the Incarnation and Resurrection of JESUS. All mankind was potentially in Adam.¹ All mankind sinned in Adam ; all mankind died in Adam ; for Adam was the head and root of his race. A new Adam was now demanded, that there might be a new head and a new root whence a new family and race should issue, and into whom they should grow up ; but this family and race were still to be of Adam, still to be man,—but man renewed and new created.

¹ Quando hoc factum est, in lumbis ejus (sc. Adæ) erat genus humanum.

It did not please GOD to reverse the order of His creation, nor to alter the laws and judgments under which men were governed.¹ But it pleased Him to introduce a new principle of life into the same creation, which should reform it, by expelling that which had corrupted and disordered it; which should bring, by a blessed new birth, out of its ruin and decay, a creation clothed with greater glory and blessedness than the old creation had possessed; which should maintain all the righteous laws and judgments by which men were ruled, tried, found wanting, sentenced, and yet enable GOD to have mercy upon all; and which should gather for Him in due time, out of the multiplied sorrow and conception of Eve, that appointed number of His elect, whom He had predestined to be His children, witnesses and partakers of His glory and joy. “For it became Him, for Whom are all things, and by Whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, (and so of sin and death,) He also Himself likewise took part of the same, (but without sin, and without desert of death,) that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death,—that is the devil.”²

When He Who before was Only Spirit and Life, became partaker of flesh and blood, He took that same flesh and blood which was derived from Adam, and which all mankind are made of; and He took it on Himself as we receive it, in “the womb of the Virgin

¹ S. Anselm, *Cur Deus homo*, lib. i.

² Heb. ii. 10—14.

of her substance,"¹ and He took it with all its weakness and infirmity, in all the completeness of our nature. And in it, by the union of the Godhead and manhood in One Person, He took hold of our nature ; and by thus taking hold of our nature, He took hold of all His elect, the true seed of Abraham, of whom He came as concerning the flesh, that He might save them for ever.

For He not only took our nature,—our flesh and blood, body and soul,—but He took them as under the law,² in their worst estate, under the sentence, and the bondage, and the exceeding condemnation ; and so dead, but Himself "free among the dead," that He might reverse the sentence, and break the bonds, and abolish the condemnation, and take it out of the way, and restore the dead to life, and admit them to His own liberty, as partaker of their human nature make them "partakers of His own Divine nature ;"³ that is, not of His incommunicable Godhead, but of His Deified Manhood. For if they are members of CHRIST, and CHRIST in His Personality is GOD, then are they members of GOD, members of His Body, of His Flesh, and of His Bones. O wonderful exaltation ! But if GOD has been made man, how should not man be in a manner made GOD. "For verily He took not on Him the nature of angels ;" rather, He taketh not hold of angels (to recover them), but He "took on Him," rather, He taketh hold of "the seed of Abraham." He, as He has begun, so now

¹ Article ii.

² See Bishop Andrewes' Sermons, Vol. i. Sermon 2.

³ 2 S. Pet. i. 4.

and ever continues to take hold of His elect, by means of His Manhood imparting to them the participation of His Godhead. "Wherefore in all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren." Like unto them in all things as GOD made them, according to the nature which He gave them ; in all things, that is, except sin, which is not part of their nature, but a degradation, corruption, and withering of their nature.

That He might be free from this taint, He was not conceived as others are, for they are conceived in sin ; but He was conceived by the HOLY GHOST, and born of a pure Virgin, that He might be one of us in the complete and entire verity of our nature, but at the same time "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners ;" not under the dominion of sin, nor therefore justly under the dominion of death, but having power over His own life, to lay it down, or to take it up. In Him Satan "had nothing ;" no entrance, no hold, no claim. He was separate, and alone without sin.

Otherwise He was like us in all things ; formed as we are formed, born as we are born. He grew as we grow, lived as we live ; He died as we die. He was exposed to temptation ; He felt weakness and weariness ; He experienced vicissitudes of sorrow and joy ; He had faith ; He received strength ; He was comforted ; He strove ; He overcame ; He was made perfect ;—as we are. But in "Him was Life ;" a holy life to expiate sin, a perfect life to make atonement for sin, a mighty life to overcome death, an infinite and eternal life to expel death.

In Him, indeed, was such a life, as could not only over-master and expel death, but could also raise and

advance that nature, which was under death, to a higher state of immortality and glory than if it had never fallen; could "clothe it upon" with such excellency, as to make it partaker in the Divine Nature; so thoroughly leaven it with the life of GOD, as to make it capable and worthy of His manifest Presence, and the fulness of His joy: so that "even that which was glorious hath no glory, by reason of the glory that excelleth." For He was "GOD manifest in the flesh," the GOD-man, Deifying our nature, our flesh and blood in Himself; not abasing His Godhead by taking into it our nature, but exalting our nature by taking it into His Godhead.¹ His Person is One, and that Person is Divine, the SON of GOD, and GOD. Hence His life, His sufferings, His words, His doings, His death, His blood, His sacrifice, His body, are GOD's.

Thus is He² an infinite and all-sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world, original and actual, offered upon the Altar of the Cross; "the Lamb of GOD that taketh away the sins of the world." And thus was He able to meet the first requirement of our fall. Thus could He redeem our nature and race from the dominion of sin and death, from the sentence and penalty of guilt.

This is the great doctrine of the Incarnation in its relation to the Atonement; the WORD made flesh, the cardinal doctrine of the Christian faith, which whosoever denies, is proclaimed by GOD's Word to be an

¹ Αὐτοῦ τοῦ Λόγου σῶμα λαμβάνοντος, θεοποιούμεθα.—S. Athan. De Divin. Christi, i. 165, Cf. 262, 158. Deus factus est homo ut fieremus Dii.—S. Aug. v. 909.

² See Article xxxi.

Antichrist. But this is not all ; the work of mercy is not even yet entirely accomplished. He has the second requirement of the fall to meet. More is yet needed, that He may become the Second Man, the last Adam.

He had taken away the sins of the world ; He had redeemed our race, and delivered mankind from bondage. But death passed on into all men, "for that all have sinned." Not only was the whole race guilty of sin, and enslaved to death, but each individual has also sin and death in him. CHRIST was the Head, and the head has its body ; He was the root, and the root bears the tree. He was to be the Second Man, the last Adam. He was to beget children ; He was not "to abide alone." He was to have a family ; He was to produce branches which should extend to the ends of the world ; to propagate Himself in His descendants, as Adam propagated himself in all his offspring.

This was needful for the great revival which GOD had promised ; and this was the effect of His Resurrection,—His Resurrection in our nature. "He was delivered for our offences, but rose again for our justification." He rose again to impart Himself, His righteousness, His merits, His Holiness, His strength,—in a word, His life to each individual who will receive Him ; to come to them one by one, take hold of them one by one, give Himself to them one by one, extend His life into them one by one, minister it to each of them continually more and more out of His abundant fulness ; to regenerate, anoint, cleanse, confirm, renew, and perfect them one by one ; dwell in them one by one, by their faith, until He has finished the work and will of GOD in them, even their own

sanctification ; then take their souls one by one to Himself, to rest with Him until the general Resurrection, when He will come to claim, and restore, and advance their bodies also. "For if by one man's offence death reigned by one, much more they which receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by One, JESUS CHRIST ;"¹ Who, "being made perfect, became the Author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him."²

This is what He said Himself, "If a corn of wheat remain, it abideth alone ; but if it fall into the ground and die, it bringeth forth much fruit." It springs up again, but not alone, not solitary. It springs up as a plant with many stalks and ears, and many grains in every ear, "thirty, sixty, an hundred-fold." By death JESUS went into the ground. By His Resurrection He came forth declared to be the SON of GOD with power, and no longer "straitened." He was now a Tree of Life.

"The first Adam was made a living soul, the last Adam was made a quickening Spirit," a Spirit giving life, imparting Himself severally to each individual believer, entering into his soul and body, flesh and blood, driving out sin and death, bestowing holiness, and blessedness and life—the Life of GOD instead of our own life, incorruptible for corruptible, heavenly for earthly, exalting us, and making us to dwell with Him in heavenly places, "a well of water" in each loving heart "springing up into eternal life." To the resurrection of JESUS, the general resurrection of all mankind is owing. "As in Adam all die, even so in

¹ Rom. v. 17.

² Heb. v. 9.

CHRIST shall all be made alive." He is the first fruits of the universal harvest.

But the first or present resurrection of the soul, that which alone makes the future resurrection salvation: That of which He speaks when he says, "the hour cometh and *now is*, when the dead shall hear the voice of the SON of GOD, and they that hear shall live:" That to which the Apostle summons, "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and CHRIST shall give thee light:" That spiritual resurrection which is the mark of the elect, the portion of the true living children of the True and Living GOD: this is imparted, not universally, but severally and individually to each particular believer, delivering them by its entrance and increase from the death which reigns, and the sin which lords by nature over them, and "ministering to them an abundant entrance" into the grace and glory of GOD.¹

"The Spirit is life because of righteousness."

It is a teeming and overflowing life. It is a self-maintaining, self-extending life, for it is the life of the SON of GOD, the quickening Spirit of Him Who "hath ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things." It is a continual reproduction of JESUS by the Spirit, a continual "forming" of Him in heart after heart, life after life, a continual extension of His Incarnation over the world and from generation to generation. It extends itself backwards and forwards, backwards to all the ancient saints, forwards to all the elect Church, backwards up to Adam, forwards to those who shall be alive at

¹ S. Aug. Tract, in Johan. in loco.

CHRIST'S coming. It fills those who receive it, dry as they once may have been, with the fulness of Almighty GOD Himself. It overflows even on those who receive it not, in civilisation and peace, and the improvement of society under the Christian dispensation. It renews the face of the earth, it changes and ameliorates, as far as this world is concerned, the lot and condition even of those who reject it, and shut it out of their hearts when it knocks at them. It pours over upon the desert.

What is it then to those who receive it? Ask the blessed Apostles after the outpouring of Pentecost, and the return of JESUS as the quickening Spirit. Ask the Churches arising everywhere in the dark dominions of idolatry and heathenism. Ask even the vain world now, and it will prophesy like Caiaphas, of the power and glory of the marvellous revival, of the past and future improvement of man's race. Ask rather thine own heart, if thou hast experienced it; for it is a great revival.

What hast thou been in time past? Not such surely as those whom the Apostle speaks of, "fornicators, idolaters, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers, extortioners."¹ Not such surely as the Prodigal Son, who went into a far country, and wasted his substance in riotous living. Not such as Mary Magdalene is thought to have been, out of whom the LORD cast seven devils. Perhaps thou *hast* trodden the paths of sin, tasted its delights, enjoyed its pleasures, obtained its recompenses. Hast thou come to thyself? "What fruit had ye then in those things which ye are now

¹ 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10.

ashamed of?" Hast thou been preserved from notorious transgressions, and manifest sins, yet walked freely in the way of the world, seeking only thy own advantage, ease, honour, enjoyment?¹ Thou hast gone the way, eaten thy bread with joy, and drunk thy wine with a merry heart, and forgotten GOD. Thy garments have been always white, and thy head lacked no ointment. And thou hast lived joyfully with the wife whom thou lovest. And what hast thou come to? Hast thou come to thyself? In what estate dost thou find thyself? Art thou withering?

The pleasures of sin have palled on thy taste; her sweets have grown bitter. Earthly hopes, and gains, and possessions have turned out to be vanity. All the promises of the world have disappointed thee. One after another they prove deceitful upon the weights. There is no end to the disappointment. The drought which was in thee by nature has increased and become apparent. Thou feelest it, consuming thee little by little, passing out beyond thee, turning thy bread of life, and fruits of delight into dust and ashes, blighting every affection, blasting the very ground, and turning its beauty into weariness, re-entering thy body and soul to waste them more and more. Thy meat has proved chaff; thy wine becomes water; thy silver is mingled with dross.

Presently the chaff became "husks of swine," the waters ran dry. Thy riches took wings, and flew away. It is a great withering. The famine is begun. What do we know of dryness of soul? Is there any trial equal to it? It is heavier than affliction, drearier

¹ See Eccles. ix. 9.

than utter bereavement. We have felt it surely at times. Earth seemed nothing ; life vanity ; GOD to have forsaken us. All around us there appeared one great blank, an empty desolate void, darkness and terrors underneath, a fathomless abyss into which our souls seemed about to drop, helpless, shivering, lost. Our existence had neither aim nor meaning. We wished that we had never been born.

Such trials especially befall those who have been sinful or vain in youth, who have nourished the corruption of their nature by indulging it, who have been like the Prodigal Son, or like Mary Magdalene. For the most part, after their conversion, they will from time to time encounter these feelings of dryness and destitution ; perhaps they will have to struggle against them all their life long. Their after existence will be, as it were, one continued watch in yearning and tears beside the SAVIOUR'S tomb. "They have taken away my LORD, and I know not where they have laid Him." All serious persons, however, will have now and then some taste and experience of this affliction. "Our soul abhorred all manner of meat, we drew near to the gates of death."¹ GOD passes them through it for their good. He leads them through fire and water before He brings them out into a wealthy place, that He may humble them and warn them against the misuse of grace, and so prepare them for the abundance of His mercies.

For the withering is great, but the revival is greater. Have we experienced it?

¹ Ps. cvii. 18.

CHAPTER V.

“He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground.—Isa. liii. 2.

WE have traced sin in its withering effect, its desolation of mankind, its destruction of the individual. We have endeavoured to appreciate this sad blight. We must continue to consider the revival. Let us begin from the individual, from personal experience. When the world was withering, the prophecy was fulfilled. It is ever so. When all fails, the LORD appears. The tender plant springs up, and the root shoots forth when the ground is utterly dry. He grew up, and we found ourselves grafted in Him. The New Man, the Second Adam to Whom we had been joined, and into Whom we had been incorporated in our baptism, had been as one asleep, or even dead. His life had lain dormant in us; and it had been like *death*. We knew Him not. We had forgotten that He was ours, and we His. We had committed the double sin. “We had forsaken the fountain of living water, and hewed out for ourselves cisterns, the broken cisterns” of earthliness “which would hold no water.”

When we were moaning over our mispent labour,

of a sudden we found Him Whom we seemed to have lost. We found Him close at hand, even within us ; not departed from us, but abiding, living, loving within us ; by His indwelling in us still keeping us dwelling in Himself. In the death of our faith, the LORD had been as one dead. In its want of love, He seemed as an Enemy. ¹The revival of our faith, was the revival of JESUS. "The tender plant" showed itself, as His grace came streaming up within us, and the soft "milk of His word" passed on into our veins refreshing us. We thought that our hearts were utterly dry, a barren desert, without hope for evermore. Unexpectedly we discovered "the Root" there, even the Root of Jesse, striking through our parched souls, and entering into the love of GOD, "taking root downward and bearing fruit upward." And this Root is the root of the Tree of Life. It fetches its sap out of the bosom of the FATHER. It derives the life of GOD into itself to circulate it through the trunk and branches.

It was hidden. Its life was hidden. Now that we have once more betaken ourselves to it, and confessed that it carries us, and that we are of it and in it, it exerts that life, and we revive. And this reviving life has more power than that withering death. Fear, hope, reverence, faith, love, feel its power, and become once more living realities in our heart. Our life has an aim. Our tears have a meaning. Our repentance is active. Our joys are substantial. Our object becomes a sufficient motive to exertion.

It is impossible to express the change which this

¹ S. Augustine.

feeling and consciousness of reality work in our life and mind. The worst pangs, the sharpest stings of repentance, the bitterest shame for sins committed, the most awful apprehensions of judgment, are no longer unbearable; they are sweetened and cheered by it. It is so great a blessing to have found out, and set before ourselves the only adequate object for our souls, namely GOD, and to have learned, and to be walking in the only way which leads to GOD, namely CHRIST, that nothing is any more intolerable, no grief without its consolation, no cloud without its rainbow, no wound without its balm. The difference between the withering and revival, is the difference between life and death, heaven and hell; an infinite difference in reality, however slight the divergence may at first appear.

The working of our renewed faith is the working of the life of JESUS within us: its fountain is the FATHER'S mercy, its channel the Flesh and Blood of JESUS, its touch the fellowship of the HOLY SPIRIT. It is therefore different in kind from any sign or manifestation of life which we had before experienced. Death was in every previous motion of our mind, in every previous pulsation of our blood, in every previous gesture of our body. Life is now come to be in them, the true immortal and eternal life. The heaviest grief with this life in it, is not only better but sweeter than the greatest joy without it. The difference is not in degree, but in *kind*. Death's joys are "of the earth, earthy;" they are of the first Adam, dust, ashes, death. But even in the sorrow of the revival there is the second Man, "the LORD from heaven." As He is in the sorrow, life and energy, the

proper life and energy of an immortal soul are in it. The heart is sensible that it has at last discovered its right object, that it is occupied with its true work, that it is no longer borne at random, aimless and helpless through a dark void, that it is no longer busied about toys and trifles. It feels itself rising in GOD's image and likeness, and tending towards its true destiny; and as "GOD has ordained that every disordered mind should be its own punishment,"¹ so has He also provided, that He Who made us for Himself should begin to be our reward as soon as we "search for Him with all our heart."

When we set GOD and CHRIST, and GOD in CHRIST thus before us, harmony and order return to our soul; the Divine power reconstitutes it in more than the majesty of its original creation. "The righteousness of GOD is revealed from faith to faith;" from the first awestruck consciousness of GOD's presence, from the first shrill outcry of the heart awakening at CHRIST's miracles, "Depart from me," to the peace which passes understanding, and the entire acquiescence in GOD's will and love, and the complete renewal into the SAVIOUR's image, all is real, all is full of life; life expelling death, righteousness abolishing sin, grace satisfying the thirsty soul.

As the sap rises in the tree, it puts forth buds, blossoms, fruits; the branches multiply, the trunk swells, the shade expands, till "the birds of the air lodge in its branches." Thus this heavenly life expands and extends itself through the whole character: good resolutions throng the heart; they harden into

¹ S. Aug. Conf.

steadfast purposes of virtue ; they put forth heavenly desires and hopes : good works abound ; they ripen into holy habits ; the fruits of the SPIRIT form themselves in all their blessed fragrance and sweetness, heavenly tempers of mind, the saintly qualities, "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance."

It is a great revival. If even its beginning is so full of life, what must this its completion be, when "godly sorrow" has gone through its proper stages, when tribulation hath worked patience, and patience experience, and experience hope, and hope the shedding forth of love? Is not the greatness of this revival manifest? It is assuredly greater than the withering. The LORD is indeed grown up within us into a tree of life, rooted in GOD's unfathomable mercy, exalting us to the heaven of heavens, covering us with its leaves of healing, filling us with its abounding fruits, sweeter than honey and the honeycomb. "Blessed," certainly, "are they who have part in this first resurrection" and revival of their souls ; they shall partake in the second resurrection, and with what an ecstasy of joy ! For there is a resurrection to come. GOD will not despise the body which He created, nor give up for a prey to the enemy that form into which He breathed the breath of life, which He imbued with His quickening SPIRIT, which He consecrated to be His temple. He Who was made flesh, and now reigns in glory in the flesh, will not for ever forsake that flesh which by His SPIRIT He has joined unto Himself, even the flesh of His saints. Not a hair of their heads can perish. In their flesh they shall see GOD.

They shall indeed see corruption, but they shall defy it in their abiding hope: "O Grave, where is thy victory?" "O Death, I will be thy destruction."

The LORD not only took on Him our nature, and entered into our death to destroy it, He also went down into Hades, into the great abyss of the grave, to triumph over it, and to break its prison bars.

His resurrection is the assurance of the general resurrection. The SPIRIT which raised Him from the dead shall also quicken our mortal bodies. They also shall partake in the glorious revival: "They that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the SON of GOD, and shall come forth." "As in Adam all die, even so in CHRIST shall all be made alive;" all, both good and bad; the former with the "resurrection of life," the evil in the "resurrection of damnation." The fire which now withers men, will then seize its last prey, the heavens and the earth which now are. The curse touched them; the drought of sin extends even to them, and "all those things which now are must be dissolved." The "dead in CHRIST shall rise first;" the hills and the valleys will literally break out into singing, as they yield up their dead; the elect of GOD will come forth. As they pass through "the fire which trieth all things," their bodies will become incorruptible, glorious, powerful, spiritual, meet and fit for the presence of GOD and His Lamb.

O glorious revival! All their fears are to be dispelled, all their tears wiped, all their hopes realised, all their doubts removed; all their expectations shall be fulfilled, yea, far more than fulfilled; "They will wake up in CHRIST'S likeness, and be satisfied with

it ;” they will each “ be like Him, seeing Him as He is ;” they will “ enter into His joy ;” they will live with Him, and He with them ; “ God will be all in all” to them, and in them ; they will be “ equal with the Angels,” being the “ children of the resurrection ;” they will “ shine as the sun.”

It will be a great revival. And where will they be who have not shared in it ? withering under the Lamb’s wrath, shrinking into themselves from the consuming fire of His countenance, and finding His wrath there also, driven like sere leaves, cast like withered branches into hell. “ Who can dwell with the devouring fire ? who can dwell with everlasting burnings ?”

LORD, my heart is dry ; my body and soul wither ; but I trust that Thou art in them a well of water springing up into eternal life ; a tree of life, whose fruits are for my healing. Abide with me, O LORD, and revive me ! Revive me with Thy continual refreshing grace, lest I be consumed for ever.

“ My love is crucified,” says the holy martyr ; “ there is no more in me the fire that devours the stubble ; but the living water speaking within me, and saying, ‘ Come to the FATHER.’ ”¹

¹ S. Ignat. Ep. ad Rom. viii.

CHAPTER VI.

“He hath no form nor comeliness ; and when we shall see Him there is no beauty that we should desire Him.”—Isa. liii. 2.

THERE have been mentioned three great purposes to be fulfilled by the economy of the New Testament,—the Incarnation, Death, and Resurrection of our LORD.

1. The introduction of a new and supernatural principle of vitality into the race of Adam.

2. The Atonement to be made, the reconciliation of the great propitiatory sacrifice to be effected.

3. The application of that life, and those merits, to each individual who would receive it.

Another purpose of the Gospel, and especially of the actual recorded life and history of our blessed SAVIOUR, is the renewal of GOD’S image and likeness in man, as a moral, responsible agent.¹ At the fall the likeness of GOD, the superinduced grace, the sanctity and holiness which robed him as a garment of light, had departed, and with its departure the image of GOD in man was corrupted and marred. This image consisted in the freedom of the will, the moral responsibility of action and judgment with which all reasonable creatures are endowed, and which makes them further capable of receiving or of losing the like-

¹ S. Athan. i. p. 66. τὸ κατ’ εἰκόνα πάλιν ἀναγεῶσαι.

ness of GOD, the sanctity, the robe of holiness which He gave to our first parents at their creation.

This sanctity is a moral resemblance to GOD,—the mark of GOD's children, their preparation, which entitles them to a participation of the inheritance of the saints in light. It may be otherwise comprised in the one word 'love,' ; for GOD is love, and love is the fulfilment of the law.

This law was broken by the transgression. The will was consequently alienated from GOD. But, on alienation from any object, there follows as a necessary consequence an unwillingness to be reconciled with Him, an ill-will towards Him, and then a hatred of Him. This seems to have been the result of their fall in the devils. Their will is totally alienated from GOD ; they hate Him ; they cannot any more become His children.

Such must have been man's condition also in the end, after the fall had occurred, if the withering of original sin had been left to develope itself fully in the complete destruction of his race,—if there had been no supernatural economy of grace provided, to remedy and overcome this fatal principle of opposition and decay. There was, however, a distinction between the sin of devils and of man ; one was entirely their own. Man had succumbed to the temptation of another. Again, the former had fallen out of heaven, from the presence and vision of GOD. According to that manifestation of Himself which He vouchsafed to His blessed spirits in His dwelling-place, they had seen Him, and rejected Him.

This had not been the case with man. "He had

been made a little lower than the angels," in an inferior sphere of being. By his fall his will was indeed averted and estranged from God, but not hopelessly. His preservation had depended upon faith; he had sinned against faith, not against sight. They had not sinned with open eyes; they had closed them to commit their sin, by looking on the veil which was between them and God, instead of contemplating Him Who was behind the veil. Their tempter had fallen from behind the veil, with his eyes upon God, may we so speak. He had said, "I will be as God; I will be like the Most High." Hence for him faith was unavailing; it could not breed love. His will was hopelessly estranged; his love diverted from God when actually before Him. This was eternal death.

Man's fall reduced him to a different state of death; to its preparatory state, not to its consummation. He had fixed his eyes on the veil; on the visible creature, instead of the invisible Creator. He had loved the creature most; he had chosen it before God. The fruit—the wife—these had been preferred by our first parents before their Maker.

This was unbelief, not actual, conscious rejection; the preference of another, not necessarily the loathing of the original object of his affection. It tended, indeed, towards hatred. Sin made man sinful; it made man God's enemy in tendency, but not His perfect enemy. Lust must conceive and bring forth sin, and sin must be finished before the result is death.

How was this growing corruption to be arrested? How was the direction of man's will to be made straight? How were his eyes to be lifted up once

more above the veil? How was he to be taught to believe in GOD's love, and so to believe in GOD? For "GOD is love." How was he, alienated from GOD through wicked works, to be reconciled and re-united to Him?

The Scriptures answer, by the Incarnation. As by this miracle of mercy it pleased GOD to introduce new life into man, to make atonement for his sins, and to impart to him His grace; so by the same miracle of mercy, manifested bodily to the generation in which He lived, and manifested in the Gospel history to all future generations, He supplied this other need. He first set Himself before them under a veil, the same veil of visible objects which had hidden Him from them. He revealed Himself to them by taking a visible and tangible form, that He might show them, by means of those carnal senses which had deceived them, the True and Living GOD Whom they had forsaken: that He might exhibit the spotless perfection of Divine holiness in the nature of man; that He might force on their attention His infinite love; that He might give them a perfect model of what man should be; that He might rectify their judgment, by taking¹ for His portion all that man fears and hates, and wanting all that man admires and desires.

Thus the life of CHRIST on earth, and the Gospel record of it, were for ever to condemn man's great mistake, and to show them the truth in its place.

He was to reconstitute man after GOD's image and likeness, in two ways:—

1st. In His own Person, "in which dwelt all the

¹ S. Augustine.

fulness of the Godhead bodily ;” in which the brightness of the FATHER’S glory, and the express image of His Person, were disclosed and rendered visible, sensible, tangible ; in which the form of GOD and Word of GOD, equal and consubstantial with the FATHER, were looked upon, seen, heard, handled. “ LORD, show us the FATHER, and it sufficeth us !” Behold, He is all that His FATHER is ; he that saw Him, saw the FATHER also. For He is in the FATHER, and the FATHER in Him ; and He and the FATHER are One.

O, unspeakable sacrament ! “ mystery of godliness, without controversy great !” In JESUS, the invisible GOD, the unheard GOD, He who had become the unknown GOD, was to be seen and heard, and was made known in all His infinite perfections ; and man “ beheld His glory, the glory as of the Only-begotten of the FATHER.”

2nd. He was shown to reconstitute GOD’S image and likeness in every individual who would receive Him by faith ; that is, own Him as Incarnate Love come to be our Deliverer and SAVIOUR. “ As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of GOD.”

This He did (1) by showing them what they ought to be, and might be, by the pattern and example of His life ; (2) by giving them the right measure and standard of human conduct ; (3) by imparting to them that grace which should enable them to follow Him ; which should instil His love into them, that love which is the fulfilment of the law, “ that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in them who

walk not after the flesh, but the SPIRIT ;” that the whole creature might be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of GOD ; that to them who love GOD all things might work together for good,¹ “ who are the called according to His purpose ; for whom He did foreknow He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His SON, that He might be the first-born among many brethren. Moreover, whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate ; and whom He did predestinate, them He also called ; and whom He called, them He also justified ; and whom He justified, them He also glorified.”

It follows that if, after this, men do not see in Him the glorious Image of the Living GOD, the Form of GOD manifest in the flesh,—the SON, the Word of Life, become flesh ; if they despise Him after the Incarnation, they are then guilty of the mistake or error which is in the end irremediable,—the “ great offence” which cannot be amended,—that settled alienation of will which refuses to be altered, which rejects Infinite Love revealed in its infinitude, which prefers “ darkness to light, because its deeds are evil.” As He says, “ If ye believe not that I am [He], ye shall die in your sins.” They will not then know what they ought to be, and might be ; they will not set before themselves the right measure and standard at which they should aim ; they will not be able to fulfil, or even to receive, the royal law of love into their hearts. They will therefore remain enslaved, and in bondage to corruption, and continue or fall back under the wrath of GOD ; they will “ fill up the measure of their fathers,”

¹ Rom. viii. 2.

the evil spirits in whose way they persist. Thus they will finally destroy themselves, arriving at that settled state of disobedience and rebellion, which hardens the heart into endless antagonism to God's will, which reduces them to such a state that they hate to anticipate His Presence, and that His manifest Presence would be the worst of torments.

It is plain, then, what that mistake is, which the withering of original sin has occasioned, or in which it has resulted. It is to walk by sight, not faith ; to judge only according to the outward appearance ; to prefer the testimony of our senses to the conclusions of reason ; the conclusions of human reason, which, without assistance from above, cannot act aright, to the revelations of Almighty God.

This is the great mistake of men, great, because of its universality ; great, because of its contrariety to our nature ; great, because of its opposition to God's Word ; great, finally, because of its fatal result, viz., the rejection of the LORD, which must hereafter be examined as following upon it.

The mistake is expressed in the next words of the Prophet. He hath no form nor comeliness, and when we see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him. In studying the Prophets, it is very necessary carefully to consider who is speaking, who is addressed, or who is spoken of in each particular sentence ; otherwise we shall have a very confused idea of their meaning.

Isaiah is evidently speaking of our SAVIOUR. But in whose name is he speaking ? He speaks, as the context shows ; 1st, in the name of the Jewish people, especially their rulers, teachers, priests, governors.

2nd, in the name of fallen mankind who err so generally through the same mistake, that it may be predicated of the whole race in general ; for the multitude of men perish through this mistake. They give themselves up to it altogether. 3rd, he speaks in some measure even in the person of the elect Church. For of the elect many for a season give themselves up to this error, and are scarcely and with difficulty recovered from it. Others are not misled by it, but being naturally liable to it, and too much under its influence, to be able at all times to act freely against it, they feel deeply the toil, pain, and shame which the remains of this delusion occasion them, the severe labours and self-mastery which under grace are required to overcome it.

In their name therefore as lamenting this contradiction within themselves, and in their brethren, in the name of heathen nations, in the name of the Jews, in the name of the irreligious and unbelieving multitude in the Christian Church, the prophet utters this lamentable outcry.

JESUS certainly had in Himself that which is desirable. He was the expected of all nations. His Advent was more or less obscurely anticipated over the world, and in particular at the time of its actual occurrence. The religions of antiquity were effete. The idolatrous religions of Paganism, their ordinances, their gifts, their pretensions no longer found credence among their followers.

The Jewish people recognised their law as a preparation for the revelation of MESSIAH. But they were rapidly turning it into a mere system of lifeless

ordinances, and superseding GOD'S Word by their traditions. Their teachers were blinded with presumption, and an universal dissolution of morals seemed threatening the dissolution of their faith.¹ The time of MESSIAH'S advent had been determined in their prophets. It had arrived. They were waiting for Him. Mankind with one dim yet earnest apprehension were expecting some Great One. Israel with beating pulses, and blood on fire with the ideas of their approaching glory, were watching for the blaze which should announce their King. But "He had no form nor comeliness, and when we saw Him there was no beauty that we should desire Him."

At the exact time when He was expected, He arrived. In the fulness of the world's and Israel's anticipation, He came. "The desire of all nations," the object of the Jews' passionate longing, visited them in the very hour when this desire and longing were at their culminating point. He came to fulfil that desire and to satisfy that longing. But He was not such a Teacher as the Gentiles desired, not such a Deliverer as the Jews longed for. There were indeed in Him form and comeliness; the form of GOD, the comeliness or excellent Majesty of the King of kings, the beauty, the countenance, the glory as of the Only begotten of the FATHER, full of grace and truth. The instruction, the deliverance and salvation which He brought, or which He came to be, were exactly such as met the real wants and needs of those whom He visited. They were the only true satisfaction for creatures made in the image of GOD, for fallen

¹ See History of Christianity, by Dean Milman. Vol. i. Int.

creatures under the bondage of the law. He was "fairer," made Himself far more beautiful,¹ than the children of men.

The world however and the Jew would not understand this. Why? Because they were labouring under what we have denominated the great mistake. They were walking by sight, not faith; they judged after the sight of the eye; they followed the decisions of their senses, or the conclusions of perverted reason. Their hearts and affections were carnal. They were wise in their own eyes. They boasted that they saw. Their will was alienated and estranged from GOD. And since they were, as a body, both Jew and Gentile involved in this error, the Form of GOD had no shapeliness,² no order to them, the Majesty of divine greatness, the looks of divine love, "GOD manifest in the flesh," were contemptible and vile in their sight. They wanted sensible or intelligible beauty, tangible, sensuous, or intellectual rewards, glory which the eye could see, pleasures which the senses could feel, a recompense which the flesh could enjoy, methodical science, external eloquence, well-arranged systems of doctrines, theories of perfectibility, a scheme of earthly polity and sovereignty, which should fill earth with abundance and luxury, which should make all the objects and secrets of creation, and all the treasures of man's understanding, subserve to the advancement of their earthly interests, the civilization and perfection of their race.

¹ Such is the force of the Hebrew word.

² The Hebrew word is derived from a word signifying to delineate, to mark distinctly.

The Jews thought, as their special prerogative, that they were to be at the head of this new creation, its kings, and priests, the objects of reverence, service, and praise to all the subject kingdoms of the earth, "to bind their kings with chains, their nobles with links of iron," with visible tokens of GOD'S presence among them, a new and brighter Shechinah beaming in Jerusalem and in the temple.

The Jews sought after a sign, the Greeks after wisdom, a sign after their own heart, and a wisdom like their own, that is, in reality, of the earth, earthy. Therefore to both as taken in the mass, JESUS had no form or comeliness, nor any beauty that they should desire Him. "The things of the SPIRIT are spiritually discerned."

Let us try and enter into the fulness of Isaiah's words.

1. He had no form, no accurate, well-defined shape and position, not the exact appearance which was expected. He did not seem to their earthly judgments to correspond with the prophecies which announced Him and described Him. He had nothing in particular to mark Him off from other men, that is, to the unbelieving. His apparent *commonness* is perhaps especially signified by this word as the first reason for men's not desiring Him. Men love that which is manifestly unusual, novel, mysterious, striking marks and traits of appearance, character, language, endowment, action, signal literal fulfilment of prophecies, unexpected displays of superhuman strength, knowledge, skill. In religion they delight in the pomp of external forms or in the manifestation of excited feelings,

in the bustle of loud and comprehensive schemes of extended philanthropy, or in pretensions to glorious revelations and assurances, or in striking evidences of self-denial and self-sacrifice, unmitigated austerities, mystical raptures, assumptions of extraordinary graces, or in exhibitions of keen gladiatorial wit, in the pomp of eloquence, the systematic and elaborate development of recondite theories.

Doubtless to the believing eye, the waking watchful sight of faith, gifted from above with spiritual discernment, everything in JESUS, birth, growth, life, power, character, language, actions, were unusual, novel, mysterious, striking in the very highest possible degree. All prophecies met in Him; all miraculous power showed itself forth in Him.

The true unfathomable deep of love, the true universal philanthropy, all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, the perfect self-sacrifice of Him Who never pleased Himself, and laid down His life for His friends, while yet enemies, the rapture of Him Who was in heaven in the FATHER'S bosom, the claim to all grace, the economy or system of salvation devised by GOD, the great theory of GOD, with its laws and their complete development, were all summed in Him. But all was veiled by the flesh, or rather by the fleshly nature of those who looked only at the outward appearance. For in truth the "natural man" does not desire the realities, only the shadows of such endowments and qualities. He loves the painted shows, not the actual, substantial, living embodiment of truth, which fulfils those desires, and satisfies those ideas which GOD has put into man's heart.

To a careless inquirer, to one that looked upon the surface only (and all wicked and worldly persons are thus careless and superficial) the birth of JESUS was like that of any other man. His circumcision like that of any other Jewish child. His name was a common name. His parents were poor and needy, as we say, of the common people. His home was mean and lowly. His slight education and employment corresponded with that of other boys. His youth and early manhood up to thirty years of age was such as that of innocent and holy young men, who grow in wisdom and age, and in favour with GOD and men.

The very fact of His living thus among men, eating and drinking, as one of them, the circumstance of His having grown up among them, in their society, in a house, garb, family, like that of His neighbours of the same class, humanly speaking, with Himself: all these and other similar particulars tended to increase that appearance of commonness, to give Him in Jewish eyes that form of a servant in which they would not recognise the Form of GOD.

Nothing indeed is more difficult to surmount than the feeling of commonness in any messenger from the LORD; least of all did the Jews anticipate this mark in their Messiah. If He had grown up in a Pharaoh's house like Moses, or been reared in the temple like Samuel, or been hidden in the wilderness like Elijah and John the Baptist, if He had been distinguished as they were for asceticism and austerity, it would not have been so difficult to own Him. He would have had at least some form, some marks and qualities to distinguish Him from other men, lines of difference

peculiar to Himself. If He had had some angel to attend Him, if some glory had hovered over Him, if His face had shone with preternatural brightness, if He had only worn a camel's hair garment, it would have been some peculiarity.¹

But while He was in reality in every point apart, alone, "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners," "a new Adam," "the last man," "the beginning of the new creation of God," He was in all appearance altogether undistinguishable from the villagers with whom He lived. There was nothing whatsoever to indicate His pre-eminence—no outward token at first in shape, feature, garb, gifts, on which to ground any title to a heavenly mission, much less to that of the MESSIAH and SAVIOUR. For this claim to be the MESSIAH began before His miracles.

With what wonder might men hearken! How strange must it have seemed when the finger of John the Baptist, whom at least all men counted to be a Prophet,—many musing in their hearts if he were not the CHRIST,—pointed out JESUS, the unknown, the unheard of, the Nazarene, the common-looking carpenter's son,—the carpenter, as they said, in His common garb, common way of life, everything about Him to all appearance thoroughly common,—as the Lamb of God, Who takes away the sins of the world, the MESSIAH, the great King, the promised deliverer, the Redeemer of Israel! What a trial of their faith!

We are apt to condemn and to marvel at the unbelief of the Jews. Let us put ourselves for a moment

¹ Some *הָדָר* *hadar*.

in their circumstances ; let us see how they were proved. Think of some little town close to your own residence. Let it be in a part of the country looked down upon for dulness, ignorance, and immorality ; let it be a place of no note, or rather, of low character and evil name. There is a poor carpenter living in it, with his wife ; honest, religious persons, perhaps, regular at Church, diligent in their duties, but uneducated and unlettered, of no mark or distinction, wearing the usual dress, living in the usual style of their poor neighbours round them, talked to by them, and conversing with them on perfect equality, and with friends, relatives, house, food, all of the most usual description. You have seen them at work, spoken to them with condescension, noticed, perhaps, their good behaviour ; it may be, encouraged them with your patronage. All of a sudden their son (as it seems) claims to be more than a Prophet, the expected MESSIAH, the promised Deliverer and SAVIOUR, sent from GOD as His salvation, the beginning of His new creation, One with the FATHER ; Whom, if expected at all, you had expected under a different aspect, with every token and sign of grandeur, magnificence, and holiness.

If we were tried in this way, we should be tried as the Jews were by the Advent of our SAVIOUR, and His claim to be the MESSIAH. It would be a great trial, especially to those in high places,—the wealthy, the luxurious, the wise, and most of all to the religious world ; to those in reputation for piety, devotion, sanctity, expounders of the law, teachers of the nation, and the world.

We are so accustomed to the Gospel history from our childhood, its atmosphere so thoroughly environs us, we acquire it so naturally and imperceptibly, that it is far from easy for us to measure the amount of this trial; and perhaps it is as difficult to appreciate the amount of faith in that little company which believed in JESUS of Nazareth, even *before* the “mighty works showed themselves forth in Him.”

Our LORD indicates the difficulty which our carnal nature experiences in this appearance of commonness, when He says, “A Prophet is not without honour except in his own country, and in his own house.” Even afterwards, when He began to preach, and to work miracles, and His words were such as man never spake, and His “works” were “such as none other man did,” He retained—may we say on purpose?—this appearance of commonness. He and His disciples kept the usual garb, manner, and way of life of their fellow-countrymen of the same condition with themselves. His words were indeed commanding, as of One endowed with the absolute authority of a supreme and sole Law-giver over men; His works were also marvellous, those of One endowed with absolute, and uncontrolled, and sole dominion over all the creation of God, visible and invisible.

Yet there was a commonness and simplicity in one way about them, which veiled to careless eyes the great power of God which was in them. There was not that visibly startling character, that tremendous, alarming display in them, which the Jews anticipated. His commands were spiritual, setting up and establishing those broad, comprehensive principles of action, of

deep, vital religion, whose greatness carnal persons can little appreciate. They were not line upon line, precept upon precept; His works were exercises of benevolent mercy, acts of healing, cleansing, nourishing, saving, lovingkindness; performed unostentatiously, without display, almost as the natural operations (which indeed they are) of His Presence; on a large scale, and by a word, the same works in many cases which the physician, or the exorcist, or the charitable among them performed with labour, and in an infinitely inferior degree. No apparent angels, no chariots and horses of fire, no armies overthrown, no fire descending from heaven, no sun standing still, and moon delaying to go down; no divided sea, no hosts overwhelmed at a word, attested the mission of JESUS. He came eating and drinking; He received and ate with publicans and sinners; He mingled on familiar terms of intimacy with His disciples; He was open of access to all. He spake nothing in secret; He was not eager to collect disciples. All was simple, plain, natural, *common* about Him.

This was a trial to all, and an offence to the carnal; to those who judge according to the outward appearance, who walk by sight, not faith.

CHAPTER VII.

“He hath no form nor comeliness ; and when we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him.”—Isa. liii. 2.

ANOTHER characteristic connected with the former, which increased the trial, was our LORD’S quietness. He grew up as silently as a tender plant, and a root shooting up out of the ground. After the brief rumour which His Birth, and the visit of the wise men occasioned, died away, nothing was heard of Him till He was thirty years of age, and pointed out by John the Baptist. Afterwards, none saw His victory over Satan ; the battle-field was the untrodden wilderness.

In His preaching there was doubtless a majesty and dignity unspeakable, against which none could contend ; still, there was a quietness about it hitherto uncommon, and to the world inexplicable. “He did not strive, nor cry ; neither was His Voice heard in the streets.” He quietly (though with omniscience) solved all the questions proposed to Him. He quietly justified Himself against all accusations ; He quietly indicated the fulfilment of all Scripture ; He quietly convicted the accuser or ensnarer out of his own lips, and suffered them to depart as quietly. He prayed alone in the silent night, or in the stillness of the

morning, under the stars, or amid the trees. He was daily teaching in the synagogue or temple any who would quietly attend to Him. He would sit for hours conversing with a poor sinful woman by the well : He would often spend hours in explaining the meaning of Scripture, or of His own words to His disciples.

If any place refused Him a passage, He went some other way. If any city grew offended with Him, He retired to another ; if men wished to make Him a king, He withdrew, and hid Himself. If the objects of His mercy desired to proclaim His miracles, He forbade them ; if the fiends dared to announce Him, He silenced them immediately. If Pharisees and Sadducees, and Herodians came forth to catch Him in His talk, He tranquilly took them in the snare laid for Him, and then let them go upon their way. He meekly paid tribute, rendering to Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's. He observed all the rules of the law, and even the directions of the Pharisees and teachers, except where they were contrary to the spirit of the law.

The trees, the birds, the waters, the flowers, the vineyards, the fields, the common objects of nature, the usual occupations of life, furnished Him with His illustrations and His parables. Even when He manifested His indwelling Godhead, and displayed in His transfiguration His excellent glory, He withdrew to the solitary mountain, and forbade the three who witnessed it to rehearse it. Even when He opened the secrets of heaven, and the mysteries of the FATHER to His chosen ones,—even when He denounced judgment, or warned traitors, there was ever the same

stillness and quietude in His demeanour and His words.

When He is seized, He permits the traitor's kiss. He goes quietly with those who have apprehended Him. Before Annas, Caiaphas, Herod, Pilate, the blaspheming council, the yelling populace, He shows the same tranquillity in deed and in speech ; the quiet of infinite meekness and patience, of unexhausted and unwearied love ; the quiet also of omniscience, and omnipotence, biding its time, and mastering its power.

But quietness, we know, is often regarded as a sign of weakness. It "hath no form ;" it confers no distinction in the judgment of a loud, boisterous, noisy, talking, hypocritical world, which measures men by its own standard, and estimates them according to the trouble which they cause, the bustle which they create, the reputation which they attract to themselves. Quietness, also, hath no comeliness, no majesty and glory. It is of a nature altogether above the comprehension of the worldly. The ignorant sensualist cannot understand the greatness of the busy politician ; the mere politician cannot appreciate the greatness of the scientific sage, in his abstracted intellectual pursuits. These have no excellency or comeliness in his eyes ; they are of a higher nature than his occupations.

The excellency and comeliness of spiritual qualities are equally invisible to the sensualist, the statesman, the sage. They are above the mere man of intellect ; he cannot understand them. How should he ?—they are heavenly ; he is of the earth, earthy. These were the

gifts which JESUS revealed, "even the seven spirits before the throne," the whole grace of GOD the HOLY GHOST.

To carnal hearts His character was altogether inappreciable ; it had no meaning to them. His outward works of power, His miracles struck them because they also were in themselves carnal ; evidences, indeed, of something uncommon and superhuman, but still appreciable by the senses, of the same order of being with themselves.

When the LORD made them¹ steps to advance them on toward those higher views, into that spiritual order of things which He came to reveal, and of which He is the Head, His words had either no meaning to them, or provoked them to forsake Him, or even stirred them up to ascribe those works to Beelzebub, and so reduce them into the common order of earth, according to their views in that age, which gave the power of miracles to evil spirits, and authority over these to magicians or exorcists. They could not view Him as "having the words of eternal life," as being the "Light of the world," "the Bread of Life," "the Joy of Abraham," "One with the FATHER ;" in a word, "the LORD of Glory." They saw Him, saw His works, heard His words, and still there was no beauty that they should desire Him. His beauty was altogether of another and superior order. It asked the eyes of seraphim ; it asked rather the eyes of GOD Himself. "For no man knoweth the SON but the FATHER," and "no man can say that JESUS is the

¹ See how He uses the miracles of the loaves and fishes, or of the palsied hand.

LORD, but by the HOLY GHOST ;” and “Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My FATHER Which is in heaven.” Sensual eyes, worldly eyes, intellectual eyes, could see neither form nor comeliness in Him or His language, in His common appearance, His quiet life, His fragmentary discourses.

To His works, which their senses demonstrated to be extraordinary, they by degrees accustomed themselves, persuading themselves after a time that they were nothing above earth, at least no proofs of a heavenly mission, no signs of the MESSIAH, although foretold expressly as such by the prophets. These works also had been (with two exceptions, and those unseen by the Jews in general) works of love and mercy ; the natural works of GOD, since judgment is called His strange work. The Jews would rather have witnessed works of this latter character ; works of terror, and judgment, and vengeance on their adversaries and oppressors ; a sign from heaven, a scathing fire, blasting the Roman power, “to be avenged of the heathen, and to rebuke the people.”

Having no affection, therefore, for those works of charity and tenderness, they grew doubly careless and unconcerned about them when they were frequently repeated, even as mankind in general pay no regard to all the miracles of goodness with which creation is filled for their welfare, and in which the invisible things of GOD, even His Eternal Power and Godhead, may be perceived by due attention. These, however, make no noise. The wonderful mechanism of the universe pursues its course in secrecy and quietness.

“There is neither speech nor language,” no sound in the motions of the heavenly bodies, no whisper in the revolutions of the earth, in the circulation of the fluids, in the growth of plants, by which mankind is nourished.

The miracles of JESUS superseding for a moment the ordinary operations or qualities of visible objects were performed with similar quietness and silence. It was indeed the quietness and mystery of Almighty power and incomprehensible Godhead. “He spake and it was done. He commanded, and it stood fast.” “The thunder of His power who can understand?”

This quiet mysterious goodness of JESUS which was the mark of Godhead, had no attraction or distinction in the eyes of a carnal world, a selfish and proud generation. It was GOD-like, it was divine, it was of an order above their comprehension. He added yet another mark of Deity. This also only increased their blindness. His patience, His marvellous patience, joined with His obedience, served but to strengthen and confirm their mistake.

In one who waited thirty years in subjection to earthly parents, to the mother and to him who was as His father, before He was announced to the world, who was careful to declare that He came not of Himself, and did nothing of Himself, Who sought not much to attract, still less to flatter disciples, who gathered one here and another there from the lowly orders of society, who accepted all who willingly joined themselves to Him if they were sincere, but proved them when they came, and suffered those who could not endure His holiness, to withdraw unrebuked from

Him, Who kept gleaning up a few stray lost ears in the great harvest field of GOD with unwearied and affectionate toil, Who rendered to all their dues, paid tribute and custom, showed all proper respect to every constituted authority, hurled no defiance against governor or Cæsar, talked nothing of the rights of the people, or the claims of the Jewish race, refused to judge between man and man, taught obedience even to Scribes and Pharisees as sitting in Moses' seat while He denounced their wickedness, Who reasoned so watchfully with His poor disciples, with no affectation of mystery or seclusion, Who endured the contradiction of sinners, Who when He was reviled, reviled not again, when He suffered, threatened not, Who was never weary of well doing, never weary of forgiving, Who bore with unruffled meekness insult after insult, and injury after injury, was depressed by no threats, elated by no promises, tempted by no offers, obedient in all points to the FATHER'S law, and careful to acknowledge His implicit obedience ; in a Man of this simple, indefatigable diligence, devoted to one object, the glory of GOD in the spiritual edification of those who followed Him, in the pursuit of this object bearing all things, believing all things, hoping all things, enduring all things, in one of this character, of this amazing patience and obedience, they could see no form or comeliness.

What though the sun goes on in quiet, patient obedience on his glorious pathway through the heavens ; what though this patience be one especial characteristic of JEHOVAH, as described in the Jews' own law, although the strength of omnipotence, and

the tenderness of infinite love were in it, it had no meaning in their eyes. They could not understand it. There was nothing in it desirable.

When finally CHRIST summed up all these graces in His submission to His trial and passion, and became "obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross," in the Form worn with watching and anguish, the Face "marred more than any man's," covered with "shame and spitting" and blood, in the Head bowing to every oppression, and meekly submitting to every indignity, in the completion of prophecies, and finishing all Scripture in the great death agony; there was no form or comeliness; there was no beauty that they should desire Him.

CHAPTER VIII.

“He hath no form nor comeliness ; and when we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him.”—Isa. liii. 2.

THE Jews were thus from first to last under the great mistake or error of the world. They walked by sight, not faith. They judged after the outward appearance. They guided themselves by their senses, or their false reason. They had no comprehension of true form and comeliness, no understanding of Divine beauty. The foolishness and weakness of GOD, as the Scriptures speak, seemed real foolishness and weakness in their eyes. They understood not that the “weakness of GOD is stronger than men, and the foolishness of GOD wiser than men.” They thought that there was nothing in those mysteries “which the angels desire to look into.” They “knew not what they did ;” but because they said, “we see, therefore their sin remained ;” and because they cried, “we are free,” they continued in bondage, and because they counted themselves whole, they rejected the physician, and because they paid no heed to the things which belonged to their peace, they were presently hid from their eyes, and because they “would none” of the SAVIOUR whom GOD had provided for them, they drew on themselves “swift destruction.”

Are we exempt from their trial and from their error? The sin of unbelief is always general. Our LORD seems to imply that it will increase with the increase of knowledge and civilization until it overruns the world in the latter days. This growing unbelief will also, as S. Peter indicates, be accompanied, as it was with the Jews, by a tendency toward scoffing. The same trial indeed is continually in the world. That which the Scriptures call the "foolishness and weakness of GOD," is always inculcated as necessary for our acceptance. Ordinances and appointments slight to all appearance, insignificant, trifling if superficially regarded, are the prescribed channels through which GOD imparts to us that grace which brings with it knowledge, reconciliation, salvation, and in a word, to use the phrase of Hooker, is the extension of our SAVIOUR'S incarnation to us.

The Gospel dispensation, the inspired canon of Scripture, the system of the Church with its faith once for all delivered to the saints, its defined organisation, its stewardship of GOD'S Word, its unaltering and unalterable creeds, its ministry of reconciliation, its apostolical succession, its forms of prayer, and most especially its Sacraments, are now and will always be the same trial to the world, that the incarnation of the SAVIOUR was to the generation in which He lived. They may in themselves be characterized as foolishness, weakness, "things which are not." Much of the world, even of that which calls itself the religious world, speaks of some, if not of all of them, sometimes with an angry disdain, sometimes with supercilious contempt, sometimes with bitter accusation,

sometimes with a slight sneer, sometimes with a half-pitying, half-mocking compassion.

Men, in the pride of their hearts, would now be admitted to God without the economy of grace, without the Mediator and His Mediation. They cannot bear to own how far they had been removed from God by the fall. They cannot endure to confess that their nature is corrupted. They do not love to acknowledge that a *way of return* must be trodden by them. They do not want the religion which God has provided. They wish to choose their religion for themselves. They wish for a religion contrived after their own fancy.

Religion itself to many persons, to the worldly and unconcerned is altogether contemptible, or at the best unmeaning, common-place, trivial. There is in it neither form nor comeliness; no beauty that they should desire it. They cannot conceive what profit, much less what pleasure can be found in religion. They regard it perhaps philosophically, as useful for society, or conducive to the welfare of the state, or as desirable to cheer the poor, and keep them quiet and orderly. They carefully confine any regard for it to the Sunday. They wish to shape it so as not to interfere with their carnal course of life and thought. They have not the least conception of any blessedness in it. Others who have far more respect, it may be even love for it, are yet unable to disentangle themselves from the prevailing unbelief.

How can you prove the inspiration of Holy Scripture? How can its canon be certified? How can the new birth, and the baptismal water be connected? How can the Eucharistic bread and wine be more

than naked memorials? How can ministerial absolution profit? How can the grace of orders be transmitted through the succession of Bishops? Why must there be one unchangeable creed?

These are the questions resounding in every direction. They are only repetitions of the questions addressed to our LORD. How can these things be? Art Thou He that should come? How can this Man give us His flesh to eat? Who can forgive sins but GOD only?

They are the various expressions of unbelief increasing in number, in vehemence, and confidence as the world ripens in material luxury and carnal knowledge. All these constitutions and appointments of GOD's kingdom are continual testimonies to us, that we are fallen creatures, and that being fallen we are removed from GOD, and from immediate communion with GOD in His Divine nature, and that we cannot find Him or come to Him except through the Manhood of CHRIST JESUS, Who is the Mediator between GOD and Man, being both GOD and Man, uniting the two natures in His Person. His flesh is expressly "the new and living way" through which we have access to the FATHER. And just as when manifest in the flesh He had no form nor comeliness, no beauty that the world should desire Him, so now when presenting Himself to us in all that mysterious constitution and organization of His Church, He too often meets with the same unbelief.

But the eyes of faith are open to the truth. They saw in the Galilean Carpenter's SON "the Glory as of the Only-begotten of the FATHER," "the Way, the

Truth, and the Life." And faith is still the same gift of spiritual discernment, the light of GOD poured into the believer.¹ "CHRIST is all in all"² to it, all things, that is, in all things, all things in the whole "ministry of reconciliation." His hand receives the child at the font. His voice blesses it and names it in reality. His hand pours the Spirit upon it. He knits and incorporates it into His own body. His confirming hand strengthens the young for their warfare. His hand, His lips absolve the confessing penitent. He distributes the bread and the wine, and pronounces them His Body and Blood in the Holy Communion.

Still in every baptism there is the Jordan, the opening heaven, the Spirit descending, the voice of the FATHER, the proclamation of adoption. Still in every Supper of the LORD there is the upper chamber, and the paschal table, the apostolic choir, and the LORD administering. Still in every absolution there is the Son of Man with power not in heaven only, which is unquestionable, but on earth also to forgive sins for the exceeding relief and comfort of the overburdened heart. All things in the Church are still the same blessed realities, and CHRIST is in them all celebrating and working in them all by His Eternal SPIRIT.

This is the great abiding truth to which our LORD so often testifies, when He declares to His disciples, that whosoever hears, or receives, or despises, or rejects them, hears, receives, despises, rejects Him and His FATHER.

We noted four chief reasons for the world's

¹ Ratio formalis assentiendi lumen fidei est, quod Deus infundit credenti.—Melc. Can. de Loc. Theol. ii. 8.

² τὰ πάντα ἐν πᾶσιν.

mistake with respect to our LORD's person,—His commonness, His quietness, His patience, His obedience. The same four marks distinguish the Church's system; the scheme of salvation set up once and for ever in the world, the heavenly Jerusalem, "the mother of us," "built on the foundation of the Apostles and the Prophets, JESUS CHRIST Himself being the Head Corner stone." He expressly foretold to His disciples that they should be in the world as He was in the world.

What is more common than the element of water? What were—and are still, in most countries—the commonest articles of food?—they are bread and wine. What can seem commoner than a few words, prayers, blessings repeated over them? What can be commoner than "earthly vessels," "men of like passions with ourselves," proved indeed, and set apart, but still by men such as we are, who shall administer these common elements, and these common materials of support?

The Creeds are commonly known; our infants can lisp them. Bibles are to be found in almost every house. A Clergyman, a Church, a Prayer Book, all these are very common. They attract no notice; they are not at all observable. Ordinations, confirmations, are recorded, like any other usual news in our papers. They are all common; they meet us everywhere when we little expect them. Who knows what a trial may be in any of them? This mark of apparent commonness was in "GOD manifest in the flesh." It blinded many who saw Him. Let us take heed to ourselves. Religion is very common.

2. All these workings of religion go on quietly, and

without noise amongst us. Controversies, indeed, and disputes, are heard at times, and resound more or less loudly in the Christian field. But they are not the saving operations of religion ; and the world also interferes in general but little with them, and that because they clash with its own selfish peace. When that happens, the world is at first half angry, half contemptuous ; they are quarrelling about words, about letters, about iotas. When they cannot cease, it perhaps waxes wroth, and for a season reviles, or it may be persecutes. Still, when salvation is at stake, and as far as the welfare of individual souls is concerned, all the work of grace goes on tranquilly and unnoticed.

The “still small voice,” which “does not strive nor cry,” comes in “the ministration of righteousness.” It strikes hear^t after heart throughout the Christian world. It cannot be stifled ; it is never withdrawn. In the hush of the Christian sabbath, in the chimes of the parish bells, in the stated round of services, in the continual celebration of Sacraments, in the presence of priests and ministers, in the preservation of Scriptures and Creeds, it is always bearing witness, and bearing witness upon earth. In the conversion and reconciliation of sinners, in the sanctification of saints, it is always fulfilling its mission, relieving and comforting God’s mourners, and saving His elect.

It is indeed working its proper miracles, arresting the wicked in their headlong course, changing their hearts, cleansing their consciences, healing their wounds, opening their lips, and ears, and eyes, to the voices and truths of the eternal world ; raising souls just dead by some act of sin, or borne onward in evil

habits, or even buried under hardness and impenitence, loosing them from their grave-clothes, strengthening and feeding them, filling them full of life, transforming them into the likeness and the fellows of angels, into the image of the Only-begotten SON of GOD.

All these great and permanent miracles, the abiding evidences and tokens of the presence and divinity of religion, are always in the world ; always to be seen, heard, handled, looked upon, by those who search for them, or attend to them. But they make no noise ; they do not strive or cry. The work is still and small in its various steps, according to the silent operation both of the natural and supernatural providence of GOD.

Therefore it has no form nor comeliness ; and when men see it, there is no beauty that they should desire it. They cannot understand it, nor discern its importance. They cannot weigh a penitent's tear ; they cannot calculate the force of a contrite groan ; they cannot value an importunate prayer ; they cannot measure the relief of a converted heart ; for they have never yet tried to estimate the weight of sin. Much less can they form any conception of that Power which takes off the burden of sin, or of the value of that Blood which expiates it. Still less can they know the love of CHRIST, which passeth knowledge. Religion is a blank to them.

There is only one cure for this ignorance. "O, taste and see the goodness of the LORD." We must make experience of religion, in order to appreciate it. The still small voice of Him Who had no form nor comeliness, nor any beauty that men should desire Him, came to the Apostles severally when engaged in

their wonted occupations. It called them, "Follow Me." They obeyed; they rose up; they forsook all; they followed Him. It was what they wanted; what they yearned for. Something not of earth, a voice from heaven, a message from GOD. It brought its own testimony with it; it at once occupied their hearts; it came from the lips of a Lamb; it was uttered by a Man,—a man meek, and lowly, and lamb-like, "the carpenter," the Nazarene. But it was the call of the Lamb of GOD, Which taketh away the sins of the world; of the Man Whom the LORD GOD had anointed and sent.

It was enough. They were panting for the removal of the burden from their hearts; for One not of earth, but above earth. They had found Him in this call; they recognized Him by the motion of their own hearts toward Him. His love drew their love, and fastened it upon Him Who was Incarnate Love before they knew Who or What He was. They felt that this was He of Whom Moses and the Prophets had spoken, little as they yet comprehended all the witness of the Scriptures. Although their view of Him was yet uncertain and most inadequate, they were assured that His companionship outweighed the world.

As they continued with Him, their knowledge of Him increased. They felt that He must not be forsaken; that they could endure the loss of everything, if only they could secure Him. "LORD, to Whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." As they remained "with Him in His temptations," and exercised the powers which He bestowed upon them, His Presence grew brighter and sweeter. They

learned, not only that He was more than man, more than prophet, but by the revelation of the FATHER, they recognised in Him "the CHRIST, the SON of the Living GOD."

And now not only did they own this truth. Its blessedness began to encompass and possess them. They learned Whom they saw, heard, handled, looked upon, viz., the Eternal Life Which was manifested unto them. They beheld His glory, the glory as of the Only-begotten of the FATHER.

Presently, to those who were His most frequent companions, the chosen three, He vouchsafes a new and yet more glorious revelation. He takes them into the mountain; He is transfigured before them. His face shines as the sun; His raiment is white as the light. As Moses and Elias disappear, He is left alone. The saints themselves are nothing in comparison with Him. The law and the prophets end, and are lost in Him; and they hear the Voice out of the excellent Majesty, saying, "This is My beloved SON; hear Him."

They understand that He is GOD-man; that in Him the kingdom of heaven is upon earth. This vision, however, is only temporary, seen by few, and transient. They must to earth again, and to the Cross. He departs from them. Their sun turns into darkness, their moon into blood. His Godhead seems suffering eclipse; His manhood itself to become death. They have fled, or denied Him, and He is lost, they fear, for ever. Presently He reveals Himself anew, more powerfully and gloriously still. He re-visits them, "shown to be the SON of GOD with power, by the re-

surrection from the dead." He speaks peace to them, declares Himself the possessor of all power, upbraids their unbelief, shows them His wounds, eats with them, blesses them, commissions them to their high office.

Still their blessedness, although great and increasing, is imperfect. Their knowledge of Him, although so wonderfully raised, has not yet reached its fulness. They are still half marvel and astonishment, in the midst of their delight at His return. They are like men wakening out of a dream. Again He leaves them; they watch Him depart; they must wait for His promise.

He tries them for a time, for those ten days. How long must they have seemed to the little holy band! With what marvel must they have seen day after day dawn, and evening after evening close in, and yet no fulfilment! With what doubt and what confidence, what awe and what joy, with what protracted, ardent expectation, with what unceasing prayer, must they have waited for the promised return!

And He came. Pentecost dawned. He is with them now; with them in His entire Personality, God and Man. They have Him all; His Divine Manhood, His Incarnate Godhead. He is theirs, and they are His; He hath baptized them with the HOLY GHOST, and with fire.

What a change has taken place in everything!—in Scriptures, in Sacraments, in promises, in the world, in themselves. Their life is nothing but CHRIST, and He is everything; and His kingdom all order, majesty, and glory. And this is He Who had no form nor comeliness, nor any beauty that men should desire Him.

CHAPTER IX.

“He hath no form nor comeliness ; and when we shall see Him there is no beauty that we should desire Him.”—Isa. liii. 2.

HAVE we in time past made light of religion, or had doubts of its value? What is to be done? The rule is simple : try it. No other direction can be given you with any chance of success : “O taste and see,” there is no other way. Follow Me, says the still small voice ; that is its burden always ; it never leaves us as we are. “Follow Me ;” take up religion and try it, try it faithfully and sincerely ; take some decided step and make experience of it ; see if it disappoints you. It has never disappointed any one who tried it, who gave it a fair trial ; fear not lest it should disappoint you.

At all events, the world is certain to disappoint you ; everybody calls it disappointing. The more we have tried it, the more sure we are that it is disappointing ; the worldly themselves all call it so. Did any religious person ever tell you that religion disappointed him? Surely they are the safest witnesses. They all unanimously declare that they find more in it than they could have anticipated. Heaven and hell are at stake ; religion is worth a trial.

The moment a man sets himself seriously to prove

it, a change passes over its appearance ; it is no more the same, dreary, unattractive, wearisome. His views may as yet be very uncertain and inadequate ; he does not even suspect to what a manner of life he is pledging himself. If he did, perhaps he would shrink back appalled at the path into which he is entering. He has scarcely the faintest idea of the sacrifices, the devotion, the separation from earth, which religion will hereafter require of him. He only feels that "a necessity is laid on him."

The still small voice is come ; it meets the wants of his heart ; he must up and away. Some one decided step, though only one, and that apparently a slight one, is to be taken for the present. But it is the entrance into CHRIST'S pathway, it leads on to glory by the Cross. These are hidden at the beginning ; he sees neither the trials nor the blessings into the midst of which he is admitted ; only he must obey the call ; he must make some act of faith. He soon begins to find that there is more in religion than he expected. It is more heart-searching than he anticipated ; it reveals him to himself in new lights and shades ; it deals with him as he has never been dealt with before, sincerely, honestly, truthfully. "The Word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder the soul and spirit, the joints and marrow."

The sword smites ; he feels its edge ; it spares nothing. He learns that there is nothing hid or secret from Him with Whom he has to do. He begins perhaps to strive and struggle, and turns this way and that as if he would escape. But the sword is within

him ; he cannot shake it from his side ; it is barbed like an arrow. He thinks that he cannot endure the ordeal through which he is passing : " Depart from me," he cries, " for I am a sinful man." He is taught really to abase and humble himself, to submit his intellect and his spirit, to know his ignorance, vileness, nothingness. He shrinks and recoils from religion, and yet he feels that he *must* practise all its duties and precepts as far as they are yet revealed to him. " Deep is calling unto deep ;" the deep of his heart to the deep of GOD's heart ; the deep of his misery to the deep of GOD's mercy ; the deep of his sinfulness to the deep of GOD's righteousness ; the deep of his helplessness to the deep of GOD's all-sufficiency.

It is impossible that he should return to the world ; he cannot bear the thought ; he has learned its nothingness. Yet he knows not whither religion is leading him, or what it is doing with him : " LORD, to whom shall we go ?" He cannot give up religion, yet he cannot understand it ; only he cleaves to it steadfastly. Thus continuing in its way, he comes to the Mount of GOD ; he ascends Tabor ; he begins an unworldly life ; he is frequent in prayer.

The aspect of religion alters. " The form of its visage is changed ;" it is transfigured before him ; its face shines as the sun, its raiment is white as the light, the glory of GOD is round about it, and His salvation in the midst of it. Confession, prayer, the Word, alms, ordinances, sacraments, become full of new life and meaning. He begins to find that it is *good* for him to be here—here in devotion, in the practices and duties of piety, in communion with GOD in CHRIST.

He awakens to the privileges of religion. It was more a matter of obedience before ; but now she is unveiled, " Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths peace."

At this stage of the spiritual life, a man abounds in all acts of faith and worship, feels that his heart is enlarged, and imagines that religion will always be easy and delightful. He would make a tabernacle among the saints upon the mountain, and would be always there. He is yet in the boyhood of religion. He has much more to learn. The bright cloud departs ; the visions withdraw themselves ; the ecstasy, the pleasantness, the peace, the Shechinah of the exalted heart, the fellowship of saints, the sweetness of devout society, the glory of the LORD'S presence, pass away. CHRIST has more to teach him. It is not yet good for him to be there, not yet with Moses and Elias, not yet with the elect in safety and in paradise. He has another lesson to learn, a deeper and more blessed lesson yet, and he must pass under the Cross to learn it.

Then ensue all the trials of a religious life, trials which up to this time he as little expected in it, as the Apostles expected the betrayal and crucifixion. The contradiction of sinners ; opposition in our endeavours to glorify the LORD and benefit His redeemed ; the apparent failure of schemes and labours of benevolence or piety ; the growing sense of our own sinfulness ; the anguish at the impediments which our past sins have thrown in our way toward the execution of our godly purposes ; the horrible fear for the ungodly ; the increasing comprehension of the world's enmity

to CHRIST ; doubts perhaps about doctrines, of which we never had the least doubt previously ; the workings of the mystery of iniquity, and the manifold devices of Satan coming out more distinctly before us, of which we can no longer be ignorant ; a sensation of numbness and lukewarmness, self-condemnation, self-distrust, and deep alarm ; difficulties in prayer, staggerings in faith, the eclipse of hope, a drying up of love ; these and other similar trials are for the most part to be encountered at this particular development of the Christian life. We have come down out of the mountain, and from amongst the saints, to the hard, cold world, where our LORD is being crucified, and we are sorely tried. He lays the Cross upon us, and we must carry it.

To meet this spiritual death, there is a new development of spiritual life, from Him of Whose fullness we must always receive, and grace for grace ; new grace in return for grace already given. By these trials and afflictions the LORD is gathering in our hearts that He may concentrate them on Himself, He is withdrawing them from the more imaginative and intellectual pleasures of religion, from all the charms of external worship, from all the delights of our inward religious experience or consciousness, from all satisfaction in devotion, almsgiving, benevolence, patience. He is stripping off all the bright and beautiful clothing of religion. He is making it bare in our hearts. He is crowning it with thorns and scourging it. He is turning it into agony. Yea, He is in a manner mortifying and crucifying it in us, that we may find Him in it—JESUS only—the sole true Life of religion, its deep inward quickening spirit, re-

vealing itself to us through His travail, His agony, His cross, His wounds.

And by means of this death and burial of religion within us, He raises us with Him from the grave, out of Hades, out of "the land of darkness, as darkness itself, and where the light is as darkness," in which we seemed for a season to be laid. And thus He shows us that which we had not yet learned, that He is indeed the SON of GOD with power by the resurrection of the dead, of our hearts dead as we deemed, and of religion crucified and buried as we imagined.

We now awaken really to the Personality of the SAVIOUR. His Divine Person reveals itself to us in religion. His personal communion with us becomes the life of our existence. He is with us now, as He was with His disciples after the resurrection. He comes and goes we know not how, or whence, or why. Sometimes He is with us, and enlightens our understanding, or rebukes our unbelief and hardness of heart, or opens to us the Scriptures, applying them to our individual case, and unfolding their meaning in our own history, or He shows us the prints in His hands and feet, and testifies that it is He the crucified and risen Redeemer Who is thus moving our hearts, and drawing our souls. Or He speaks peace to us in absolutions and blessing. Or He calls us to the fulfilment of new duties, and imposes on us new charges of devotion and love. "He is around our path, and about our bed, and spying out all our ways." Still He appears, and vanishes, and reappears we know not how or why. He visits us only at certain times, and for a limited season with the consciousness of

His Presence, and encompassing power and mercy. At other times we know not where to find Him.

Now it is when we are alone, now when conversing with a friend, now in the morning watch, now in evening meditation, now in the solemn assembly, now in the breaking of bread that He thus shows Himself. While our hearts are still burning within us, He is gone. Ere we can grasp our joy, He has withdrawn and hid Himself. He calls us by our name, and we know that it is He; and then when we are about to clasp His feet, He forbids us to touch Him, and vanishes in an instant. He instructs us, and gives us peace, and sheds a blessing upon us, and before we can adore Him He ascends out of our sight.

While He is with us, all things seem easy. We feel our sins deeply. We are full of compunction and contrition. Our minds glow with thankfulness. We experience a sense of freedom, and largeness of heart. We defy all temptations. Our desires are drawn heavenward. We can weep for our unthankfulness, and cry and groan after righteousness. We can toil and labour with pleasure in His service. We find new delight in ordinances and Sacraments.

This is His Presence with us.

His departure leaves us in comparison desolate and afflicted. Our difficulties and doubts have returned. We are full of amazement and wonder at our loss. Our hands are heavy, and our knees feeble. We go burdened and stooping. We are alarmed at our deadness and lukewarmness. Our hearts seem growing cold. "Who is able to abide His frost?" He is however always in our thoughts. We are always address-

ing Him. While He is present we are listening to Him, to His rebukes, to His expostulations, to His promises, to His encouragements, to His absolutions, or directions. We in turn are pouring out our hearts before Him. We acknowledge all His accusations. We press His rebukes to our hearts. We expostulate with Him in return. We bow our head under His absolving hand. We make our vows and promises of future amendment and obedience. His name is always gushing up in our hearts, and rising involuntarily to our lips, and behold¹ at "the risen sunlight of that Name, every cloud flies, the clear sky returns."

When He is gone we are still crying after Him. His name still occupies our hearts. "Thou didst turn Thy face from me, and I was troubled." "Where art Thou?" "Why carriest Thou?" "Wherefore art Thou as one ashamed, as a mighty man who cannot save?"

Then from afar out of the Temple, from the Holy of Holies, we seem to hear His voice in reply, bidding us to invoke Him, and take no refusal, to cry after Him, and never cease. "Call upon Me in the time of trouble, so will I hear thee, and thou shalt praise Me."

During this period of spiritual progress, the LORD seems coming and going from the soul, as He visited the saints after the resurrection: and the soul's communion with Him resembles much that of the disciples during those solemn forty days. It longs too much after sensible manifestations of His Presence and love.

It is devout, humble, fervent, expectant, but self-

¹ S. Bern. ii. 2744. Veniat in cor JESUS, et inde saliat in os, et ecce ad exortum Nominis lumen, nubilum omne diffugit; redit serenum.

conscious. It dwells, so to speak, on the CHRIST of the three first Gospels, more than on the CHRIST of the Gospel of S. John, more on His human history, than on His divine Majesty. It pictures to itself a Man meek, humble, patient, gentle, loving, tender-hearted, with tears in His eyes, blessings on His lips, graces of healing in His hands. It beholds Him torn with scourgings, crowned with thorns, defiled with spitting, rent with wounds, and still enduring ; and it knows and acknowledges that this is the SON of GOD, and that all these indignities are the marks and tokens of His affection toward it, and its willingness to receive it.

As S. Bernard has observed, this love for CHRIST, though good and profitable, is yet to a certain extent carnal, directing the mind chiefly toward the manhood and the flesh of CHRIST, and toward what He did, suffered, commanded in the flesh. “ Filled with this attachment it is readily excited by any discourse upon these points. It hears nothing else so gladly, reads nothing else so zealously, repeats nothing else so frequently, revolves nothing else with so much delight. There its holocaust of prayer swells up as from the savour of the fatted calf.

“ Before this suppliant stands the sacred Form of the GOD-man, either born, or at the breast, or teaching, dying, rising, ascending ; and all these views and revelations kindle the mind to truer love for righteousness, to stricter mortification of the flesh, and give it deliverance from its temptations, and the extinction of its desires. The love of the SAVIOUR’S flesh has destroyed every fleshly inclination. ‘ But it is the SPIRIT

which quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing ;¹ ‘and the LORD is that SPIRIT,’ and ‘though we have known CHRIST after the flesh, yet henceforth know we Him no more,’ that is after the flesh.”

The Pentecost of religion comes. CHRIST returns as He promised with the Baptism of the HOLY GHOST and fire. He came to fulfil His assurance. “If any man love Me, he will keep My commandments, and My FATHER will love him, and We will come to him, and take up Our abode with him.” We could not have loved Him at all unless He had already come to us, nor keep His commandments, unless He had already been with us. But He speaks of coming yet again, and accompanied by the FATHER.

Who shall express the meaning of this wonderful assurance? or conceive the distinction between the advent of the SON by Himself, and His entrance into the heart accompanied by the FATHER? The coming of the SON is the illumination of our understanding, the instruction of wisdom; and the coming of the FATHER is the awakening of our love for wisdom. For the “FATHER loveth the SON,” and to love is a paternal attribute.

“When the LORD comes to me, not in rebukes and anger, not in judgment and contending with me, but in comfort, mercy, mildness, and love (showing thus His divinity, for ‘GOD is love,’) I know that He comes not alone. Then His FATHER is with Him. For He Who is the FATHER of the eternal Word is the ‘FATHER of mercies and GOD of all comfort.’ If I find my understanding opened that I may under-

¹ S. John vi. 63.

stand the Scriptures, if I find the word of wisdom gushing up out of my inmost thoughts, if mysteries are unveiled amid light pouring down from above, if the ample bosom of heaven seems to expand before me, and showers of heavenly thoughts to stream down thence into my heart, I recognize the Presence of the SON. These are the riches of the Word. We are receiving of His fulness."

"But if at the same time an humble but abounding devotion baptizing and dissolving the whole heart pours into me, if my love for the wisdom which is revealing itself in me begets in me a hatred and contempt for vanity, lest knowledge should puff me up, or the frequency of these visitations exalt me, then I am conscious that I am dealt with as a son, and I doubt no more that the FATHER has come to me."

There is a calm in this manifestation which hushes all the previous varying emotions. A quiet, manly, earnest resolution and determination, now and from henceforth take possession of the heart. We look through the wounds of JESUS into the secrets of His heart human and divine, and in His heart see the heart of the FATHER also.¹ We behold all the thoughts which He thinks concerning us, "thoughts of peace," mercy ineffable, grace preventing, assisting, preserving, bestowing perfect reconciliation, complete revival and renewal, the sanctification of our body, soul and spirit, the compassions already experienced, the "glories yet to be revealed in us," the predestined purpose to save us, the everlasting love foreknowing and choosing us before the worlds, taking hold of us

¹ See S. Bern. ii. 3034.

in due time, bearing with us, chastening, comforting, stablishing, strengthening, settling us, preparing a place for us in the blessed dwelling of the saints, as if heaven itself was not good enough for us ; all these, all the bowels of infinite tenderness and inexhaustible goodness, all the everlasting splendours, all that “eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man,” appear to us as our portion in CHRIST’S heart, and in the FATHER’S heart—for they are One.

The bright, unruffled, unsullied calm of heaven looks down on us in the fatherly aspect of GOD’S countenance, and we doubt not that the word of CHRIST is fulfilled, that the FATHER and the SON have come to us.¹ Is not this “the Holiest” into which we are bid have boldness to enter? into which we pass through the Blood and Flesh of JESUS, the New and Living Way, His most precious wounds? And not only are the SON and FATHER come to us ; according to the promise, They take up their abode with us. Ineffable promise !

Yes, Pentecost abode in the Apostles. It was an abiding presence which then came to them ; it never left them. It filled them to the full, it overflowed ; it gushed out at their lips ; it could not be withheld. Thenceforth the infirmities and imperfections of their faith, and knowledge, and love ceased. “The joy of the LORD was their strength.” The whole “seven spirits before the throne,” all the Graces of GOD the HOLY GHOST came into them through CHRIST. They had ceased to doubt : they had ceased to fear ; they had

¹ S. Augustine.

ceased from their high hopes, from their vain imaginings, even from their too eager desire after the visible manifestation of CHRIST. Though they had known Him after the flesh, henceforth they knew Him so no more.

They had a better presence than His fleshly presence with them, or rather within them ; His love and the FATHER'S, which are one love, constrained them. They could not keep back, nor be deterred, nor rest from their labour of unwearied love. They could not any more strike into the air, nor preach and toil without fruit.

They had become foundations of the eternal city of GOD, not to be moved or disquieted any more ; dead to the world, crucified to it altogether ; "knowing Him in Whom they had believed," and "believing that He was able to keep that which they had committed to Him unto His own day ;" inseparable from the love of CHRIST by persecution, by distress, by famine, by nakedness, by peril, by sword, by death, by life, by angels, by principalities, by powers, by things present, things to come, height, depth, or other creature. They were no more anxious about the questions which before agitated them so deeply, the difficulties of Holy Scripture, the dread enigmas of the world, the distractions of the Church, the questionings with their own heart if they were indeed saved or not, the desires after assurance, the yearnings for superiority. All these are passed ; they have ascended above them. They have soared over the clouds ; they have risen into the true light, the spotless day. They have entered the Holiest ; they have come where "GOD is all in all."

And to the FATHER, SON, and SPIRIT; to the everlasting counsels of the Blessed TRINITY, which made and re-made them, they can leave the solution of all those questions, the interpretation of all those terrible enigmas. They acquiesce and rest in that grace which is sufficient for them, and that strength which is made perfect in weakness.

Thus this love conforms them to itself, and transforms them into the likeness of Him Who is "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." They are "more than conquerors through Him Who loved them." They have passed victory; they have become kings; they are at the Victor's banquet. The mansion of the FATHER in them imparts to them the steadfastness of His throne, and endows them with the likeness of His immutability. They know "how to want and to abound." In prosperity and adversity they will preserve an inviolable and unshaken evenness of mind, blessing GOD at all times.

Thus, amid "the changes and chances of this mortal life," they will attain, so to speak, the unchanging and unchangeable. They will be always renewing and reforming themselves by grace, into the image of the likeness of the Eternal FATHER of the Co-eternal Lights,—the image of the SON of the Living GOD, with Whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

"They that are joined unto the LORD are One Spirit." The mind of CHRIST will enlarge their mind and "fill it with the fulness of GOD." They have entirely sacrificed themselves, that is, their will, before the mercy-seat of Grace. They will what GOD wills;

they will not what GOD wills not.¹ They are at agreement with Him, and can therefore walk with Him ; assured that He will never leave them nor forsake them, and that there is "none beside Him."

And thus they are entirely delivered from the great mistake and error of the world, by this Presence and Love of the Eternal Truth. "They judge all, but are themselves judged of none." They have "the Unction which teacheth them all things, and is the truth, and no lie ;" and teaches them this, by causing them to love it. They see it predestinating, producing, judging, reforming, renewing, dividing, ordering, disposing all things. They are borne upon its secret, glorious, unerring movement. They acquiesce and exult in its infallible righteousness ; they rest upon its unbounded mercy ; they glorify its holy justice ; they are encompassed by its blessed jealousy ; they are indrawn and enshrined in its love ; they have the mind of CHRIST.

Religion has at last assumed its proper form and comeliness. It has "beauty that they should desire it ;" the beauty of the Only-begotten SON, in Whom the FATHER is, and Who is in the FATHER ; the beauty, in comparison with which all else is dross and dung ; the beauty before whose brightness the sun and moon are darkness ; the beauty of the King in His palace, the Bridegroom in His chamber ; the beauty which enraptures all the hosts of the blessed with infinite and eternal delight ; the beauty which is the joy of GOD Himself ; the beauty which cannot any more permit them to be anything else than dead and buried to the world.

¹ Dante, *Paradiso*, iii. 79.

CHAPTER X.

“He was despised and rejected of men.”¹—Isa. liii. 3.

ON mistaken conceptions follows erroneous choice; for our conceptions determine our decision. We were created in GOD’S image and likeness; His image was in the freedom of our will, that we have the power of moral choice. The likeness was the holiness bestowed upon us by the gift of grace, and presence of the SPIRIT.

When our first parents transgressed, this likeness departed. The garments of holiness were taken from them. “They knew that they were naked,” for they were left to themselves. But the image of GOD remained in them; marred, indeed, and distorted, but still ineffaceably impressed upon them. It is our nature; we cannot escape from it. Turn which way

¹ Ἀλλὰ τὸ εἶδος αὐτοῦ ἄτιμον, καὶ ἐκλείπον παρὰ τοὺς υἱοὺς τῶν ἀνθρώπων.—Sept. Vers.

Despectus et novissimus virorum.—Vulg.

נִבְזֶה וַחְדָּל אִשִּׁים *nibzeh vachadal ishim.*

The last two words are interpreted in three ways: as meaning (1.) Who is less than man; or (2.) Who is the lowest of men; or (3.) from Whom all men cease, i.e., withdraw themselves. The word *chadal* seems almost equivalent to “nidering,” the old Saxon word of reproach.

we will, we cannot flee from the tremendous responsibility. We have the faculty of judgment, and the power of choice ; and we must answer for its use. We may deny that we possess it ; we may strive to put it from us ; but it is in vain. It is inwoven in the texture of our souls ; it is their very substance. For what is our soul or life, but the perpetual exercise of volition or will determining the condition of that soul or life, which alters as the will alters, grows with its growth, ripens with its maturity, perishes in its death, lives in its life ? Our will is our soul in act.

Our inclinations are only the prompters of our desires ; our desires are only the motive energies of our will ; our reason and conscience are only impulses, attempting to influence and direct its motion. Our will is the result ; it takes hold of and unites itself with the proposed object ; it determines our actual consent or refusal ; it makes us to be what we are, and so also what we shall be for ever. The will implies moral choice, and moral choice when worked out makes moral character.

But choice plainly implies some object which may be accepted or rejected, or the preference of one among two or more objects. What, therefore, is man's object ? Surely (since GOD "hath made nothing imperfect") his object must be that which will satisfy all the wants and cravings of his nature,—of his body and soul, since he is both body and soul ?

Has man a capacity for the reception of truth ? Has he a capacity, or rather necessity, of love ? His capacities are limited by no boundary except his will, and that is in a manner infinite, for it is made in GOD's

image. Nothing lower than perfect truth, nothing narrower than perfect love, can suffice for the capacities of his nature. GOD alone is in every sense infinite. He alone is perfect truth and perfect love. "Thou hast created us for Thyself, O GOD, and our heart is restless till it reaches Thee."¹

GOD, therefore, by the very constitution of our nature, and the necessity of things, has proposed Himself to man, and indeed to all reasonable creatures, as the proper object of their choice ; or rather, He gave Himself to them in their formation, since He made them in His own image and likeness, and therefore endowed with truth and love, which could not fail, as long as they were not corrupted, to cleave entirely to perfect truth and love. For it was by participation of that truth and love that they were made to be what they were. This was the likeness to GOD which He bestowed on them.

But they had the power of choice, for love must be free ; love is the free attachment of mind to mind. Constrained love is an impossibility. It was necessary, therefore, for their final perfection, that they should accept and adhere to that Perfect Truth, and love and unite with that Perfect Love, by their own moral choice. They were able to question the one, they were able to reject the other.

It came to pass accordingly, through the temptation of the devil, that man averted his love from his Creator, Who is Perfect Love. When he did so, and to do so, he acquiesced in untruth ; for since no imperfect love can wish so much happiness as Perfect Love, nor any

¹ S. August. Confess. i. 661.

finite object confer so much happiness as an Infinite Object, when his heart turned away from GOD to an inferior being,—to a creature, like or beneath himself,—it was necessary that he should deceive himself, or which is identical, suffer himself to be deceived, and turn away from the Truth also, in order to accomplish his unhappy purpose.

The thought of transgression rose before the hearts of our first parents from the poisonous lips of the Evil One. When they admitted it for an instant, they were departing from Perfect Love. As they turned away, the shadow of sin fell on their understanding. Mist after mist crowded round them,—the hope of escaping GOD's sentence, the expectation of becoming as Gods, the curiosity of knowing evil as well as good, "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, the pride of life." The truth was hid from their eyes.

The creature seemed preferable to their Creator; they chose a fruit before their GOD. Their choice was made; and in the perversity of their choice, their will was perverted, and by the perversion of their will their understanding was darkened. They had turned from their Light, and stood in the consciousness of their ill-doing, as in their own shadow. They shrank in their miserable nakedness; they would have hid themselves from the Presence of Perfect Love. They thought to escape, and then deceive the Eyes of Omniscient Truth. They endeavoured to conceal themselves with their sin, and by their very endeavour condemned themselves out of their own mouth. For "perfect love casteth out fear, because fear hath torment." "And who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one." Man's love had fallen away from perfect

love. Man had wilfully shut the truth out of his conscience ; his nature, therefore, had become corrupt. That awful and dark mystery of original sin, transmitted (who shall say in what way ?) from our first parents, was introduced into our blood, into our hearts. Man had the image of GOD still within him ; but only to his condemnation. He had the power of choice, but only to abuse it. He had all the motives to do right within him, all the evidences of Eternal Power and Godhead round about him, to bereave him of all excuse. He had still that nature which was formed for his Maker, —the capacity for GOD, an existence whose wants GOD alone could satisfy. But he had alienated and withdrawn this his nature from the condition of its perfection ; that is, from entire dependence upon GOD.

Thus he stood suspended over the “great gulf,” the infinite abyss, the bottomless pit which is eternal separation from GOD, from love, from truth, with no power to save himself, power only to destroy himself. It was then that before his eyes a Form came, the Form of Him Whom he had forsaken, and from Whom he had departed, in place of Whom he had chosen any visible, perishable creature, any miserable idol inferior, infinitely inferior to himself. Out of the shadows in which he was standing, that Form deigned to arise. Because man was fleshly it came in flesh and blood ; because he was sinful it came in the likeness of sinful flesh ; because he was a slave, it came in the “form of a slave ;” because turning from GOD he had emptied himself of all good, it came having emptied itself of everything save what man had, by taking all of man, save his sin, into Itself.¹

¹ See S. Greg. Theol. Or. xlv. 22.

For this Form was the Form of GOD. He Who "being in the Form of GOD thought it not robbery to be equal with GOD." He came as He had been seen from all eternity in the predestined purpose of the ever blessed Trinity, and incarnate SAVIOUR GOD-man, One in "Whom dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily," "GOD in CHRIST reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them," a Hand stretched down from heaven between man and the infinite abyss beneath him.

He came also to proclaim and declare that which man had forgotten, that nothing is desirable save truth and love, perfect truth, and perfect love, "none good but one, that is GOD." He came to expose the lie through which wretched man preferred the creature to the Creator. "He came to reveal the nothingness of all earthly goods by wanting them, the dreadlessness of all that man feared by enduring it."¹ He came therefore not only to be man in the entire verity of our nature, but also to suffer and be crucified as man, that out of His crushed and bruised humanity He might make an eye-salve to anoint men's eyes, and restore them to the vision of GOD which they had lost, and so further to that likeness of GOD, which of necessity follows on beholding Him. He came through his flesh and blood thus taking hold of the seed of Abraham the elect among men, that "they all with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the LORD, might be changed into the same Image from glory to glory, even as by the SPIRIT of the LORD."

Accordingly He came not only to die for man, but

¹ S. Augustine.

also to live in man, not only to offer Himself for all men, but also to offer Himself to men separately one by one, to present Himself at least to each in particular of "as many as the LORD their GOD should call." Furthermore, in order that they might be able to choose aright, He by this His coming to them severally bestowed upon them that power by which the perversion of their will might be rectified, and their moral choice amended, that henceforth they might no more vaguely ask with Pilate "What is truth?" but receive it into themselves; no more only idly question what GOD is, but understand that He is love, and thus once more love Truth and love Love, and become indeed GOD's children by adoption.

Having therefore by His incarnation and death removed every obstacle to man's return, having taken away his sin and "blotted out the handwriting of ordinances which was against him, which was contrary to him," having "abolished death and having brought life and immortality to light by the Gospel," having "by death destroyed him that hath the power of death, that is the devil;" having further opened men's eyes to the truth by His history, and set before them in it a pattern of perfect obedience to demonstrate the possibility of serving GOD in the flesh, and also to show them what the life is at which they should aim, and yet once more having come to each baptized person in their baptism by His SPIRIT to enable them to act according to the revelation thus bestowed on them; He is for ever amongst us, offering Himself to us, offering Himself freely, fully, perfectly, offering Himself to us to be our pardon, our absolution, our

cleansing, our renewal, our reconciliation, our peace, our guide, our light, our strength, our wisdom, sanctification, and redemption, our robe, our crown, our wealth, our joy, our glory, our blessedness.

He gives Himself to us thus first of all in our baptism, by His own free act, "for as many as have been baptized into CHRIST have put on CHRIST." But as our nature developes itself, as we become men, that is, moral agents, accountable, responsible, capable of will, capable of choice, it becomes necessary that we should accept Him Who has thus bestowed Himself upon us, cleave to Him Who has joined Himself to us, love Him Who first loved us.

This is the purpose and object for which He has given us His HOLY SPIRIT. We must by our own consent give an abiding reality to that which our baptism signified and began. We must freely give ourselves up to the SPIRIT of GOD which draws us. By a continual repentance and a living faith we must maintain or recover that principle of life, that indwelling and out-working grace, which "mortifies the deeds of the flesh," and brings forth "the fruits of the SPIRIT," which abolishes the "old man" within us, and renews within us that New Man which "after GOD is created in righteousness and true holiness."

Now,¹ as has been observed, love is the only one of all the emotions, feelings, and affections of the soul, by which the creature can, however unequally, make answer to its Author, or repay Him at all in kind. Love however is the permanent settling of our hearts upon some particular object. It is choice carried out

¹ S. Bernard, ii. 3179.

and made abiding. It is the life of repentance and faith; for without love no one can endure the humiliation of repentance, or fulfil the obligations which faith entails upon him.

Do we therefore answer our Author and Maker by fixing our affection upon Him as He has upon us? Do we repay Him in kind, loving Him as He loves us, not in the same proportion, but with the same freedom and entirety? If not, as He has offered Himself to us, as He offers Himself to all men, and still more to all Christians, and as He has given them that which the heathen have not, the SPIRIT by Whom we may love Him, it is plain that He allows us to receive Him or refuse Him, and this is the universal trial of all mankind.

Furthermore since the great Gospel doctrine is that "GOD was in CHRIST reconciling the world to Himself," since it has pleased GOD to offer Himself to us in CHRIST JESUS, and (as far as we know) in no other way, the form of our trial is the reception or refusal of JESUS. "He that hath the SON hath life, and he that hath not the SON hath not life." Behold the distinct alternative.

And "He was despised and rejected of men." Whichever way we interpret these words, whether with our own version, or with the Septuagint, "His Form was dishonoured, and failing beyond that of men," or with the Latin version, "He was despised, and the last of men," or as other interpretations give the last clause; "He was less than man, the most abject of men," or "One from whom all men shrink;" still the purport of these words is of the same solemn melan-

choly, the same awful sadness. They set forth the terrible *consequence* of that mistake which overspreads earth, of judging after the sight of the eyes and the outward appearance.

Hath He no form or comeliness, nor any beauty that men should desire Him? What follows? The necessary result of this grievous mistake in our conceptions, of this erroneous view is—wrong choice, the contempt and rejection of Him Who thus offers Himself to us. Yes, conceptions determine our choice. Desires lead us to close with the object of our longing. We despise that which has no form or comeliness; we reject as undesirable that which has no beauty.

To all who are labouring under the common error, His form must be unhonoured and despised. He will seem indeed actually to fail, to fail even beyond the sons of men, to be eclipsed by any other object. He will seem to be the lowest and last of men, one from whom all must shrink and flee, a very scorn of men, and outcast of the people, the song of drunkards, yea, even below all men, a “worm and no man;” yea lower still, even sin, “for GOD made Him to be sin for us Who knew no sin;” and a curse, as it is written, “Cursed is every man that hangeth upon a tree.” O my GOD, must this be the place which Thou must take? O SAVIOUR, is this the room in which Thy children set Thee?

In the world to come “GOD will be all in all.” The SON’s mediatorial dispensation will have ceased after the Judgment, and according to His Manhood He will be subject to Him that put all things under Him, that GOD may be all in all, and the unspeakable

bliss signified in this assurance may be bestowed upon the saints. "We shall see Him as He is." His Godhead will be fully manifested in His Divine Manhood. The vision of the everlasting GOD, of FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST, will be their eternal blessedness. In this life we are in His mediatorial dispensation, our access to the FATHER is only through His mediation, through His human nature, His flesh and blood.

Here therefore "CHRIST is all in all," that is, to as many as receive Him. To the rest He is less than nothing. Can it be so? Must this be our trial? Must we make this choice? When CHRIST was manifest in the flesh was it not so? Had not men to make their choice? As soon as He was born, He was accepted and rejected. The shepherds and the wise men worshipped Him. Herod and Jerusalem rejected Him, and compelled Him to flee into Egypt. When the LORD Whom they sought came suddenly to His temple, there was a little band to receive Him. The rest saw no more than a common purification. When He began His ministry a few followed Him, Peter, and John and James from their fishing; Matthew from his money; the Magdalene from her sins. When He revealed His mediation, and our need of His incarnation, and showed the necessity of His flesh and blood for everlasting life, and thus manifested the sacramental character of the new covenant, begun in the great mystery, or sacrament of godliness, GOD manifest in the flesh, most of those few fell away; the twelve clave to Him.¹ When no earthly

¹ S. John vi. 66.

recompense attended His ministry, one of the twelve apostatised in heart first, and then in act and deed.

By mighty works, by gracious words, by His un-earthly saintliness of life, by His unwearied patience, by the continual fulfilment of all prophecy, He set Himself before His own people ; before rulers, before priests, before teachers, before the nation. But to the guides and leaders among them, and eventually to all the nation, His mighty works seemed manifestations of diabolic agency ; His words continual provocations ; His gentle saintliness gluttony and wine-bibbing ; His unwearied patience contemptible weakness ; while they despised altogether His accomplishment of their Scriptures, although they were often themselves His instruments in that accomplishment.

The LORD's ministry among the Jews was one continual offering of Himself to His own people first, and their continual rejection of Him. And this was their crowning trial ; and it was their condemnation that they rejected Him, when He had come to them Himself in Person. For the Light was come into the world, and was shining upon them, and yet they would not receive it. They loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. Ye will not come unto Me, He cried, that ye might have life.

Hence also His solemn denunciations on all the cities where His chief works were done,—Chorazin, Bethsaida, Capernaum. He had, by His manifold miracles, pressed Himself especially upon their notice and acceptance. Therefore they had sinned doubly in rejecting Him. Hence also His tears over Jerusalem, when about to murder the One SON, the Beloved. He

saw her eyes closing for ever, and the things which belonged to her peace refused with scorn, and thenceforth for ever hid from her. As in the cradle, so also on the Cross; as at His birth, so also in His death; in the very agony of dying, still even out of two thieves crucified with Him, one chooses Him, the other rejects Him.

After His Resurrection, the same truth holds good. Some of His betrayers and murderers repent; the remnant of election believe Him, and receive Him, forgiving, absolving, saving those who had crucified Him. The rest are still blinded. As His Name spreads out on the Apostles' preaching, and in the mighty rushing wind of the SPIRIT'S operation, everywhere still some accept, some reject Him. The former are the few, the latter are the many.

But in the record of our LORD'S Passion, this awful truth was delineated in yet more striking characters and colours. There we best look for the exact fulfilment of this prophecy of Isaiah. There, as if condensed into a vivid point, is exhibited the whole spiritual history of mankind. "Whether of the twain," said Pilate to the Jews, "will ye that I release unto you, Barabbas, or JESUS, which is called CHRIST?"

This is the choice which mankind has to make, more especially all the Church of GOD—Barabbas or JESUS.¹ Your decision must be made; you cannot escape the alternative; it is laid upon you. You must choose. O behold the timid, unjust, worldly judge! knowing

¹ Μὴ ἀγνοεῖτω δὲ ὁ κρατούμενος ὑπὸ τῶν ἡδονῶν, ὅτι καὶ αὐτοῦ, ὡς οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι, τὸν Βαραββᾶν αἰτεῖται, καὶ τὸν Κύριον ἀποκτείνει.—S. Athan. Opp. i. 1027.

what is right,—testifying of the excellency, innocence, righteousness, kingliness of JESUS, and yet balancing Him against Barabbas ! the least and lowest of mankind, the rebel and outcast, the robber and the murderer. Mark the history carefully.

Yes, Pilate sat upon the judgment throne ; and “power was given him from above ;” and therefore it was his duty to execute righteousness and judgment without respect of persons. He was not apprehending any particular trial. And behold One was brought before him ; and he believed Him to be guiltless and righteous and only delivered out of envy. His accusers fail to establish any charge ; all their attempts come to nothing. And every word, and every gesture, and even the speaking and strange silence of the Prisoner, the very dreams of Pilate’s wife, proclaim and ratify His perfect innocence.

Pilate endeavours to evade the responsibility which his position necessarily entailed on him. He sends CHRIST to Herod, to throw it off upon another ; but it returns. Herod insults the LORD, but sends Him back to Pilate. Then he endeavours to make it over to the Sanhedrim. “Take ye Him, and judge Him.” This attempt also is vain ; the Sanhedrim, in their mad perversity, will not pollute themselves at the Feast time with cases of life and death. The question comes back anew to Pilate ; he labours again and again to bring the accusers to a different mind. But they see, with the ready craft of wickedness, that he has laid himself open to them by forfeiting his proper dignity, and listening to false accusations against his better feelings. They therefore only wax louder and

bolder, and more violent against both the Accused and the judge. Pilate's fruitless appeals only end in obliging him to give way more and more.

He then sets before the Jews the alternative, in such a way as he thinks must move them at least to a common respect for themselves. He will not consider the hardness of man's heart. I offer you a choice : which will you have? Ye have a custom at the Feast. There are two between whom ye shall choose. One is your King, "JESUS, Who is called CHRIST ;" the other is the robber and the murderer, the foulest and most odious criminal in the dungeons. Which will ye? Barabbas or JESUS? O, my SAVIOUR, they prefer Barabbas !

Once more. If Pilate cannot move the Jews to a sense of justice, (and how should he, when setting them an example of injustice?) or even to self-respect, (and how should he, when neglecting to respect his own authority?) he may yet move them, as he thinks, to pity. He will not remember the cruelty of envy. He will fulfil half their wish ; He will execute part of their vengeance. He will torment JESUS, but stop short of destroying Him. "The tender mercies of the wicked are cruel." He bids JESUS to be scourged, and it is done. Torn, bleeding, crowned with thorns, in purple rags, amid scorn and shouting, Pilate brings Him forth. "Behold the Man !" The sight awakens no compassion ; only a tenfold storm of wrath. His appearance adds fuel to the burning flame. They are instant with loud voices, not rejecting JESUS only, but requiring Him to be crucified.

Finally, Pilate, as if to testify before all that he is

acting against his conscience, and as if he could make over his own sin to another, bids the water be brought, and washes his hands before them all, and declares himself (O madness !) innocent of the blood of the Just One. Why sittest thou there, O Pilate, if thou wouldst be innocent ? Why art thou a judge, if thou darest not act for thyself ?

But the Jews' choice is made ; the prey is theirs. " His blood be on us and on our children." They have preferred the worst criminal to CHRIST ; He therefore must be crucified. They have set Him last, the last and lowest of men, beneath the vilest malefactor. But this is not enough ; He must be brought lower still. He must go down into death ; lower still, into a slave's death ; lower still, into a cursed death. This is their unshaken, immoveable determination.

O man, behold thy choice ! Is not Pontius Pilate, the unjust judge, as thy fallen and degraded conscience ?—the fallen conscience of mankind, seated by God upon its throne, and endowed with power from on high, but wilfully unable to fulfil its great office ; perverted by itself, selfish, cowardly, knowing what is right, judging right in itself, discerning the sin which it commits in giving up CHRIST, and yet unable, by one straightforward exertion of its natural power, to clear itself of the guilt which it fears, once and for ever : afraid to set itself against the world, unable to endure a persevering clamour, endeavouring to thrust off the responsibility of its decisions upon others ; consenting to oppose religion, and yet avowing its high opinion of it ; asking what is truth, as if it really doubted, whereas it is assured enough in its heart all the

while ; labouring by half measures of persecution to win for religion the compassion of its enemies, and only inflaming their enmity the more ; toiling to justify the righteous, shrinking from acting against its own sense of right ; but oppressed, wearied out, overwhelmed by degrees by the repeated assaults of the world, consenting at last to the total surrender of truth or duty, that is of JESUS. Yet with strange inconsistency it washes its hands, affects to charge its guilt on those more violent than itself, and declares itself clear and pure, even in the very act of consenting to its great sin.

And the Jews, the clamorous adversaries of JESUS, the instigators of the fearful judge,—do they not represent our carnal and corrupt affections, our wild, rebellious desires, our stubborn unbelief, our wavering, changeful resolutions, our covetousness, our vanity, our sloth, the many antichrists “who are” always “in the world ;” the shadows of that spirit which always, and which “now, worketh in the children of disobedience,” the embodiment of that “carnal mind,” that love of the world, “the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life,” which is “enmity against GOD.”

Their voice is as the outcry of that great apostasy, that Babylon, that Jerusalem, that great city of iniquity, “which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our LORD was crucified ;”¹ of that perverse and disobedient heart, that old Adam, which reigns triumphant throughout the multitudinous inhabitants of the city of confusion. It has set itself on

¹ Rev. xi. 8.

sin ; it has made its choice ; it has resolved to indulge itself. It has chosen its own will before GOD's ; it cares not for consequences. It *will* have its way ; it will be its own God ; it will walk after the sight of its own eyes, and the lust of its own heart ; it will not hearken to the conscience which opposes it. When conscience requires of it to think ; when conscience from its judgment throne, and as endowed with GOD's authority in the soul, resists it, and opposes it, then it rises up in rebellion against it. It is in tumult and in uproar. It praised religion yesterday—now it loathes it. It is moved ; the waves rise ; all its angry passions begin to shout.

The miserable conscience trembles ; it has no inward courage. It has been accustomed to deceive itself ; it shudders now. A new sin is required of it. It dares not once for all, by a strong act of pious resolution, put down this rebellious flesh. It hesitates. Then the flesh calls to the world, and the world to the flesh. Deep calleth unto deep ; one deep of sin bids another deep vomit its legions. The misused intellect, the corrupted reason, the hypocrisy of false religion, must be summoned to its assistance. As the Pharisees and Scribes, Caiaphas and his priests they must stir up anew, and agitate, with subtle, lying arguments, the abounding love of falsehood against the truth, or inflame wild passionate desires set upon their unhallowed object, to overcome the sentence of Pilate. The tumult swells.

The conscience shrinks ; it wavers and trembles, but the flesh will not spare it. Its agitation increases ; it is driven to its last resource ; it produces its Barabbas. It sets the sin openly against JESUS. Which

will you have? You must have one or the other. It expatiates on the guilt of sin, on the danger of sin, on the shame of sin, on the righteousness of JESUS, the excellency of holiness.

But it has already yielded up its authority, and surrendered its proper dignity. It must abdicate its rightful power. It bids the flesh choose, as if there were any real question *which* the flesh would choose, or as if its choice was not long since made and settled. The flesh demands the sin, and the world re-echoes with applause. The uproar waxes louder, the flesh grows mightier and more daring, as the conscience grows more cowardly. The conscience would lay the judgment off on some friend or adviser; but the flesh will not let it off. It seeks for counsellors and multiplies directions. But the question will return. It then tries half measures to give up or oppose religion in part. But the flesh insists on its complete surrender. It speaks in praise of godliness. It strives to move the flesh to pity by the pains which the spirit suffers in doing evil. But the flesh has no pity. It has tasted the blood of the LORD, and it thirsts for more. It will have all or none. It will now be satisfied with nothing short of the entire overthrow of religion in the heart.

The soul finds all its twistings and turnings, all its shrinkings and excuses, all its half measures and attempts at reconciliation utterly unavailing. The flesh will have all. It demands all. It is "instant with loud voice." Yea, GOD requires the same. He asks all. The soul is between the two. The alternative is laid on it. Ah, conscience has betrayed itself.

It has left the decision to the flesh, and now the flesh insists on its deciding. It can only give sentence as the flesh pleases, and wash its hands in vain.

Such is the mystery of man's nature. Such the awfulness of GOD's image in him. The alternative is upon him. He cannot escape from it. He must have Barabbas or JESUS; and to have Barabbas in peace, he must, if it were possible, altogether destroy JESUS. His conscience revolts, but he gainsays his conscience. His conscience leaves the decision to his passion, surrendering its lawful authority; and his passion insists upon the sin, and conscience gives way by degrees, and at last yields altogether, and gives sentence that it shall be as the old Adam wishes. The choice has been made. The conscience has consented. But it would fain think that it has washed its hands, that it has not surrendered its power, nor betrayed its duty; that it is the passion which is in fault, that it has not forfeited its prerogative, nor become a slave.

Thus this awful choice of Barabbas before JESUS, and the consequent rejection of JESUS exhibited at His passion is a representation of the history of the reprobate world as far as it has been admitted into the Church, and of the history also of every reprobate Christian soul. Barabbas or JESUS, a sin or JESUS; an unclean spirit or JESUS; Satan or JESUS; the robber and murderer, or the SAVIOUR; these are our alternatives. All our life long we are embracing one or other of these alternatives, choosing one or other of these objects. From the cradle to the Cross our LORD during His earthly life was thus chosen by one and rejected by the other. And from our cradle to

our death-bed we are always thus either choosing or rejecting Him.

And this alternative extends from the highest to the lowest. Simple and learned, rich and poor, chose Him at His cradle ; there also simple and learned, rich and poor, rejected Him. Simple and learned, the rich and the poor, Joseph and the thief, chose Him on the Cross. Simple and learned, rich and poor, scribes, pharisees, teachers, Caiaphas, and the people, and the reprobate thief, rejected Him.

And this choice and rejection are owing (how who shall say?) to the secret counsel of His predestined purpose. He chooses us that we may choose Him, but also that we may reject Him. "Have I not chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?" and rejecting Him, He hardens us that we may lose Him altogether, and losing Him altogether, be altogether lost.

CHAPTER XI.

“He was despised and rejected of men.”—Isa. liii. 3.¹

LET us now therefore bring home to our hearts the solemn responsibility which by our creation and redemption it has pleased GOD to lay on us, the greatness of the alternative which of necessity is proposed to us, Barabbas or JESUS, JESUS or Barabbas, sin or the SAVIOUR, the SAVIOUR or sin. It would be well if we felt this more. The choice is continual and unceasing, although it is at times brought out more distinctly and vividly before us. It is upon us from our first dawn of reason while we are yet upon our mother's arm. It is upon us as we lie upon our death-beds. It cannot be evaded in the bloom of youth. It cannot be shaken off in the palsy of age. We can make it in comparative innocence and purity. We can make it out of the depth of utter degradation and criminality. The alternative is sometimes pressed upon us with immeasurable weight, and we are conscious that it is so. At other times it seems to rest

¹ See, for this chapter, the work, *De Cruce et Passione Dom.* in the *Opp. S. Athanasii*; and the sermon on “Barabbas, or JESUS,” in Dr. Pusey's *Sermons from Advent to Whitsuntide*; and the “Warnings of the Holy Week,” by Adams.

upon us lightly; but it is not the less surely and seriously recurring.

Our embracing the one side or the other may, as in a moment, change and eventually for eternity, the whole course and tenour of our life and destiny. At the same time we must be continually exercising, and renewing our choice; and yet each particular step in the alternative may be so narrow and slight as to be imperceptible.

In every the least thing as well as in the greatest, in the common daily round of life, as well as on solemn occasions, in our deeds, in our words, in our thoughts, in our friendships and attachments, in our work and in our rest, in our labour and in our amusements, in society and alone, in our gesture and our raiment, in our very meat and drink, we must be always exercising this wonderful power, making this solemn choice, taking one side or other of the alternative, and forming or ripening in ourselves by every such act that abiding choice or love which makes our character, and determines our prospects through all the endless ages of eternity. For right and wrong attend on everything; and CHRIST is the Law of right in all things. The wrong is nothing except disagreement with Him. It is by a repetition of right choice that through GOD's grace we grow holy, by a repetition of wrong choice that we grow unholy; and our trial may extend over many long years, or it may be gathered into a point of time.

Take it first as extended over our life, and let us watch it as Isaiah's words direct us, in the history first of those who reject CHRIST. He offers Himself

to us that He may be ours, and we His, by the instruction of parents, by the education of school, by sermons, by the Prayer Book, by every ruin and every conversion of sinners, by every example of holy men, by every affliction or deliverance vouchsafed to us, by every conviction of our conscience, by every call which reaches our mind, by every penitent compunction, by every opportunity of charity, by every healthful stir of our heart. In these and manifold other ways He calls us, and offers Himself to us. He is always, that is, requiring of us some definite step of faith, some real choice of Himself. On the opposite side is the flesh offering its sinful pleasures, or worldly gains, or selfish comforts, or threatening us with the loss of that which is dear to us, or with pain or rebuke or labour. So the choice begins.

For example, to take some simple illustrations, is a child hesitating whether it shall check its passion or indulge it, it is choosing between CHRIST and anger. Should not parents and instructors remember this? Is a boy considering whether or no he shall deceive his master: he is choosing between CHRIST and falsehood. Are you debating with yourself whether you shall rise early at the fitting time, or permit yourself to take unnecessary slumber: you are choosing between CHRIST and sloth. Have you to face some ridicule, the scorn, taunt, laughter of careless school-fellows, or companions, in order to persevere in any religious practice; have you to endure these insults if you would kneel down and pray like Daniel: you are then choosing between CHRIST and the fear of men. Have you to give up some practice or habit which

exalts you in the eyes of friends or of the world : you are then choosing between CHRIST and the praise of men. Are you debating whether you shall hoard up some money which you possess, or expend it on self-indulgence, in show, in dress, in luxury, on your palate, or whether you shall bestow it in charity, or use it for religious purposes : you have then to decide between CHRIST and covetousness.

Can you give away your alms so as to be seen, and so as not to be seen with equal advantage : are you questioning which to do : you are choosing between CHRIST and the love of display. Are you pausing before you suffer a word which you know will give useless pain, or be profane, or cause scandal, but which will be witty, or amusing, or create laughter, to escape from your lips : you are choosing between CHRIST and man-pleasing. Are you on your knees praying ; if you willingly suffer your mind to wander away, and fix itself on some earthly object, and allow yourself to keep desiring that in preference to the grace which your lips seem to ask for, you are thus preferring the creature to the Creator.

So extensive and universal is the application of this principle, so perpetual and inevitable is the alternative. For what are anger, levity, falsehood, sloth, covetousness, the love of men's praise, the fear of earthly hopes,—are they not unclean spirits ? are they not sins ? And sin is viler and fouler than Barabbas. Are they not Satan's works ? and is he not the worst robber and murderer ? If then in these common matters, in this daily round of life, you take in general the wrong side of the alternative, you are, little as

you imagine it at the time, preferring sin before your LORD, Satan before JESUS.

By the frequent repetition of this evil choice the characters of men become matured in evil. By the continued movement of their soul through one hand's-breadth of sin after another, they imperceptibly, yet surely, recede from CHRIST. The effect of each stroke of the hammer on the heated metal is so slight as to be invisible, yet by the multiplied repetition of the strokes the iron at length assumes the form to which the workman shapes it. And as each choice has thus its definite effect on the heart, their continuance must at last determine its form for ever. For a considerable period of time the real state of a man's heart may be hidden from the world, and hidden from himself. He may "feed on ashes and a deceived heart lead him astray," and yet he may be unable to mark the gradual declension of his character. He may be unable to say, "Is there not a lie in my right hand?" while it is fast conducting him to perdition. But though he thus quietly and contentedly leaves CHRIST, CHRIST will not for the most part give him over so easily; He offers Himself again a second time, a third time, and, as it were, forces Himself on the sinner's unwilling notice.

There are turning points in men's lives. Some affliction, sickness, bereavement, some startling accident, or other more secret and hidden visitation, arrests the sinner in his headlong course. The glare of the light of heaven flashes athwart his path, and illuminates the landscape round about him. For a day, for an hour, for a moment, he sees himself as he is in GOD's sight; he discerns his danger. The pre-

cipice on whose brink he hangs discloses its terrible abysses. He perceives "that the dead are there;" he learns that he has been living in a state of delusion. His sins come up before him out of the deep; they are all, he feels, alive; all before GOD, all between him and CHRIST, all accusing him before the Judge; and He too appears. He was standing behind the door; and now the door is open, and the Judge is revealed; the Judge, "strong and patient," whom the sinner has been "provoking every day." The misery and guilt of his condition are for a season plainly revealed. The loathsomeness of ungodliness is evident. The beauty and goodness of religion are manifest. He wishes that these were his. "May I die," he cries, "the death of the righteous, and may my last end be like his!"

At such times CHRIST is offering Himself to the sinner a second, a third, a fourth time. He Who went down into hell hath deigned to descend into the midst of that shadow of death, those impure haunts, those unclean spirits with whom the sinner dwells. He has condescended to revisit in person that perverse, rebellious heart. The sinner will not hearken to CHRIST's prophets, His ministers, His messengers. It may be he will hearken to the SON. CHRIST comes. The trial now seems, and indeed is, gathered to a point. The great alternative is presented again forcibly and distinctly. Barabbas or JESUS, thy sin or CHRIST, which wilt thou have? The soul now feels that it must choose. Conscience, which has so long slumbered at this new demand on its assent, is awakened. Like Pilate, he has entered the judgment hall, and

taken its seat in the heart, and resumed its authority from on high. The soul would fain cast out its sin. It would cleave to good. Then the passions and desires, and the old evil habits become clamorous and violent at the unusual resistance. They demand their wonted indulgence; they demand their sin. The intellect, the imagination, the memory polluted and polluting hasten, like the Scribes and Pharisees and teachers, to increase and inflame their vehemence. They devise unhallowed excuses and justifications for sin; they furnish hypocritical arguments in its favour; they disguise it under false names; they stir the memories of past pleasures; they recall in vivid colours the old evil haunts, the scenes, the persons, which have been the occasions of past transgressions; they touch the strings of unholiness, covetousness, impurity, pride, until they thrill as of old with the motions of concupiscence. To these they have been accustomed to consent, and they scarcely know how to resist them. They expected that all would be easy; that they could at once obey their conscience; but their conscience itself trembles and shudders. They are bitterly disappointed at their lamentable infirmity. They discover with the greatest dismay that their hearts are not yet changed throughout; that the work of their renewal is scarcely begun; that much toil, and many tears, and multiplied prayers and repeated exertions are required of them, in order that GOD may "purify their hearts through faith."

What is to be done? The choice is once more brought before them, and they cannot evade it. They are conscious of its boundless importance, and yet

it may lie apparently in a little matter, an unimportant every-day temptation. For example, the penitent may be hesitating between the infraction or observance of some particular direction in the rule of life which he has adopted on his conversion. He may be debating with himself whether he shall omit some prayer or attendance at Holy Communion, because he is troubled with wild thoughts of anger, impurity, pride, or other besetting sin. He is disinclined to take the necessary exertion to overcome them, and yet he feels distinctly that to omit the duty or forfeit the privilege will be a step backward, or at least a look backward. Then the deceitful heart argues—What can it matter? It is only for once. It is only a trifling point. Alas, it is Barabbas or JESUS. One turn of the head, and all may be over for ever; for “no man putting his hand to the plough and looking back is worthy of the kingdom of heaven.”

“Remember Lot’s wife.” One look back, and her feet fixed, she became the pillar of salt, the type of barrenness and its curse. That one step in relapsing taken, all the former evil passions revive one after another. The Spirit which bound them is grieved. It withdraws its restraining grace. They rise up by degrees; they take life; they take arms; they rush back with renewed vigour. The wind rises; the rain falls; the flood swells; it beats upon the heart. Alas, it has removed from the foundation on the rock. It has taken stand on the shifting sand of its own purposes. It cannot keep out the torrent. It is swept away. “Thy breach is great as the sea—who can heal thee?” By that one omission of the act of faith, in order

to indulge freely the promptings of the flesh, the rule of life is broken through ; the safeguard of obedience is lost ; the evil choice is made. There may be struggles ; there may be self-upbraidings ; there may be multiplied excuses ; there may be apparent indecision and irresolution ; there may be repeated convictions of conscience. It may be a considerable time before the fatal results show themselves. The soul may flatter itself that it has not relapsed far. But it is relapsing. Its feet also are fixing ; its senses are departing ; its eyes are closing to its danger ; its ears are growing deaf to God's voice ; its lips are becoming silent in prayer ; its voice, the outcry of real devotion, is gone. It is motionless ; it is unfruitful ; it is barren, a pillar of salt, an enduring monument of the wrath of God.

Of none, therefore, is such intense watchfulness, such exact regularity, such steadfast adherence to a holy rule of life required, as of penitents. Hence comes the remark of S. Ambrose, that it is so much easier to find many faithful from the first than one true penitent. It is impossible that persons thus converted can be too accurate in fulfilling all the promises and vows which they made unto God in trouble. A step, a hand's breadth, a line out of the straight way, and they may eventually be lost. They may have chosen Barabbas before JESUS. "What hast thou done?" said Samuel to Saul. It seemed but a little act of impatience. It seemed to have many excuses. But it had let loose the wilfulness of his nature. Saul made very light of it. But it swept him finally into the deepest condemnation.

“What hast thou done?” To how many might this question of the prophet be addressed with the same mournful sternness? In that one little omission, that one slight impatience, that one trifling act of disobedience, however disguised, the whole corruption of man’s heart, and an eternity of perdition may be wrapped up. None knew clearly and thoroughly what they were doing at the infinite sin of our LORD’S Passion; not Gentiles, not Jews, not unclean spirits, not Herod, not Pilate, not Caiaphas, not Satan; for the LORD hid His face from them. “Had they known Him they would not have crucified the LORD of Glory.” But their ignorance did not clear them. The very word for sin in the language of Scripture is error, the missing the mark, the deviating from the furrow. Sin is always named simplicity, folly. Men are always said to perish through lack of knowledge.

It is error, it is folly, it is the worst madness to reject JESUS, to choose anything before Him. But it is not therefore excusable or pardonable. It is still sin. And if men despise Him, they will certainly reject Him; and they will despise Him, if they do not know Him; and they will not know Him, if they look away from Him. For when they look away from Him, they forget Him; and when they forget Him, they, of necessity, look through shadows towards the eternal darkness, and that is blinding; and they stand in their own light, and the darkness gathers over them.

Now, as in every single act, whether outward or inward, whether of deed or of thought, this choice is continually renewed, and as each renewal strengthens the hold which that choice has upon us, as we are

mostly guided in our future decisions by custom and habit, and our way of life, until we choose unconsciously but for ever, our whole life will gradually become one unceasing repetition of the choice once made, our choice will become love and hate,—love of what we choose, hatred of what opposes it. It will be one endless rejection of JESUS, one endless preference of Barabbas to Him, one endless acceptance of sin, one endless hatred of the LORD.

We must end in perfect union with CHRIST in heaven, or in perfect union with sin in hell. For as an eternity and infinity of wickedness developes itself out of that wrong first choice, so an eternity and infinity of righteousness is brought by GOD's grace out of that first right choice. The true faithful heart, the real convert are marked by sincerity. They have indeed no guile. Their eyes are single. They may yet have little knowledge, even be yet in error. But directly truth is proposed to them they close with it. The moment that CHRIST requires them to obey Him, they do not hesitate. They are not as yet aware what He is going to require of them ; but they can say with genuine confidence, "LORD, what wouldest Thou have me to do?" for they mean to do whatsoever He bids them.

When they have promised to the LORD their GOD, they will keep their promise ; if it be but some little matter, nothing will keep them back from rendering it to Him. They will never delay to perform their vows. They will never therefore look back. They may hold the plough feebly. They may drive an unsteady furrow at first, but it will be right on in the

straight way of living faith. Each acceptance of CHRIST's calls, each observance of their rule of life will be a definite acceptance of JESUS Himself, of new life, new health, new strength, new powers of endurance and perseverance. They are always closing with Him, and as they close with Him their choice of Him ripens into love for Him, love ever increasing and brightening. It will end in that perfect union with Him in heaven which can never more fall.

“He was despised and rejected of men.” Alas, for this grievous contempt, and this great rejection ! Let us take heed to GOD's image within us. Let us look well to our every choice. We can never tell which may be our final one. How low soever you have fallen, one right choice may raise you up again by degrees out of the mire of sin, and dust of death, and jaws of hell, to the rock of ages, to a saintly life, to the much love of the much forgiven, to an eternity of blessedness. One wrong choice may drag you down from the threshold of heaven, from the neighbourhood of angels, to disobedience, to unholiness, to a degraded life, to a miserable end, to the abomination of desolation, to the ruin of Saul, of Balaam, of Judas.

CHAPTER XII.

“A man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.”—Isa. liii. 3.

WE know not here what sorrow is ; neither in this life are we really acquainted with grief. We look on the black surface of the Stygian pool, but cannot penetrate with our eyes its fathomless abyss. We feel the chill of the mists which rise from it, but cannot yet imagine what it is to plunge into its drowning waters. We meet one who walks with us for a time, in black garments with veiled face, and sad voice, and the scourge whose iron enters into the soul. We shrink as her lash smites us in our body or in our mind. But we have not received grief into our flesh and into our hearts for ever. She has not yet made herself ours, and us hers. We are not yet become one spirit and one body with grief.

When the mists gather thick, and fall in rain upon us, still they are but drops of the bitter waters which reach us, only the prelude of the coming storm. They are heavy, for they are drops out of the cup of God. One of them before now has nipped the heart, wasted the body, consumed the mind. One of them can for a season turn the sun into darkness, and the earth

into a wilderness. One of them can take away the sight of the eyes, and the music of life by a stroke. Pain of body, distress of mind, the affliction of bereavement, desolation when our darlings are taken from us, poverty, want, hunger, thirst, cold, nakedness, reproach, shame, the fear of death, these are drops which reach many from the cup of God, heavy to bear, men sometimes say intolerable. But they may be borne, they have been often borne, they are borne daily by many. They have been even rejoiced in. They cannot torment us much. They cannot trouble us long. They cannot deprive us of all consolation. Time reconciles us to some, custom to others. Years blunt their stings and pangs. The occupations of earth take off their edge. The trouble passes, and we are at ease

In the time of affliction we thought it overwhelming, and behold it is gone by like a painful dream. We imagined that we felt grief, and behold it was only its shadow. Take even worse sorrows, convictions of conscience, anguish of heart, agonies of remorse, irreversible chastisements, Esau's bitter tears, Saul's perpetual trembling, Cain's horrible mark. Even thus the sinner knows not fully what that is which is possessing him. He can seek for respite in the world. He can gather his horsemen like Esau, or build his city like Cain, or at least gird on his armour like Saul. He can at all events anticipate a relief in the grave, a release in the tomb, ease in death. He can indeed for the most part drive off the inward enemies which harass him, and stifle the pains and alarms which vex him, under the multitude of earthly pursuits, under

the pleasures or the business of the world. He can shut out by ambition or by the cares of earth all prospect of the world to come.

When even men reach such tremendous degradation that, as in our penal settlements in past years, the man's heart is taken out, and a beast's heart given in its place, when all are to themselves and to one another an unceasing vexation and persecution, though grief certainly shows its face there under a yet more hideous aspect, still there is the work to be done, the food to be tasted, the sleep to be expected ; and there is relief in these ; and the callous body and hardened heart cannot thoroughly feel their own wickedness and wretchedness. They are "past feeling."¹ They are reckless ; they have become insensible in great measure even to their own pains.

For the most part however, we are not exposed to such trials. We undergo the usual afflictions of life. We weep perhaps, and cry out, and speak much of our multiplied troubles. But the abundant consolations and resources which God's mercy provides for us, and even the present infirmity of our mortal nature prevent us from really comprehending their dread mystery. We cannot yet trace grief clearly up to its source. We do not yet know what that must be which flows out of the fountain of sin, whose sole origin is sin. We cannot yet master the truth that the stream naturally resembles its fountain head, and that flowing out of that fountain with a continuous increase, it must at length widen and deepen into an infinity and eternity of anguish. We cannot

¹ ἀναλγητοί.

distinguish its source, nor follow it on to its end. We only gaze in wonder at its surface, and shudder as we taste some drops out of the deep. It is not yet incorporated with us, not yet become our nature. We know it not. But there is One Who knows.

“In the hand of the LORD there is a cup, and the wine is red. It is full mixed, and He poureth out of the same.” There are many, we are told, who must drain it, drain it all, even to the dregs. God shall even wring them out, that they may not miss one drop. And the LORD knows the contents of that cup, for He hath prepared them. He hath mixed them Himself; He has full mixed them. Infinity is in them. Eternity is in them. “For Tophet is ordained of old, for the king He hath *prepared* it, He hath *made* it deep and large. The fuel thereof is fire and much wood, and the *breath of the LORD* like a stream of brimstone doth kindle it.”¹ And this is the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.

Observe! the punishments which are to be endured hereafter, are ordained and prepared by God. They do not come by chance, or by necessity. They are God’s ordaining and preparing. He full mixes the agonies of His cup. He it is Who has made the bottomless pit deep and large, Who has heaped up the multitudinous fuel. His breath kindles the everlasting flame.

“Giustizia mosse il mio alto Fattore ;

’ *Fecemi* la divina podestate,

La somma Sapienza, e il Divo Amore.”

¹ Isa. xxx. 33.

GOD Who is Light and Love has thus made the outer darkness and the eternal torment. He Who hath made all things "by number, weight and measure," and Who proportions all things according to the exact rules of unerring righteousness, and Who has "decreed that every disordered mind should be its own punishment," has exactly numbered, weighed, and measured the punishments attending every reprobate man or angel. He has proportioned them to every one's transgression, and this determination is expressed by the image of the cup.¹ But then He has extended all these punishments into infinity, and prolonged them to eternity. And this must be so, because in departing from GOD, men are all guilty of an infinite fault, and because in choosing sin before Him they prefer an eternity of damnation, to an eternity of blessedness.

There may be degrees then of actual agony and torture in hell, but the grief of each individual must also necessarily be infinite and endless, infinite because his wickedness is infinite, and endless because his choice of evil is unalterable. GOD therefore Who has ordained sorrow, and prepared grief, knows perfectly what they are. No creature, it appears, as yet knows this. Men certainly do not in this life. The fiends as yet probably do not know it fully. For they speak as dreading the place of torment, "the Abyss," the place where torment has no bounds and no end, as that which they would fain avoid for a sea-

¹ S. Aug. En. in Ps. iv. 157: Calicem autem propterea puto appellatum, ne quid præter modum atque mensuram vel in ipsis peccatorum suppliciis, fieri arbitremur.

son more, although they knew that it was their appointed portion. Fearful also to think! it was the Presence of JESUS which reminded them of it, for they besought Him not to cast them into it. The wish therefore to be parted from CHRIST, that is from life and blessedness, and the sense that the infliction is of the wrath of GOD seem necessary for the completion of grief. The twofold consciousness, that GOD has been wilfully lost for ever, so far as mercy or relief are concerned, but that He is present in anger for ever executing the righteous chastisements fore-ordained before the worlds, fills up grief to the full. Nothing can be added to it then.

Since, however, GOD only knows Himself, He alone can estimate at its proper weight the misery of total banishment from His Presence, the anguish of His utter illimitable wrath. He knows what grief is. He fathoms the unfathomable abyss. He measures the great deep. He searches it out through all its extent. "The darkness is no darkness with Him, the night is as clear as day." "Hell is naked before Him, and destruction has no covering." The outer darkness, the eternal night have no secrets concealed from GOD. He knows also how to make His ruined creatures capable of this grief, of desiring death, without being able to die. Rather as they were created in GOD's image and for GOD, they must be capable of it, and must be given up to it, if they are not partakers of His blessedness and joy.

In the loss of infinite gladness, there is to reasonable, self-reflecting beings, infinite regret. In the thought that this loss is their own choice, there is in-

finite remorse. In the thought that it is by GOD's decree, there is infinite despair. In the thought that their condition is hopeless, there is infinite rebellion. In the sense that GOD wills their sufferings, there is infinite blasphemy and hatred. In the knowledge of GOD's power thus obtained, there is the feeling of utter impotence. In the folly and the madness of their ruin, and their complete degradation, there is infinite confusion and shame. Are not these the teeth of the worm which dieth not, and the flashes of the unquenchable fire for the soul, its undying agonies.

There is pain also in their risen bodies, risen as fuel for the fire, and food for death, the unquenchable fire and undying worm, whatsoever these may mean, a pain intense, immense and endless, which suffers them not to "rest day or night." Then there are the dominion of fiends, the tyranny of the unclean spirits, the outer darkness, without a hope, without a ray.

The Scriptures describe this grief as the second or eternal death. Death and Hades themselves are cast into the lake of fire with the damned. It swallows those things which are most terrible beforehand, Death, namely, and Hades, as only shadows of itself. They will be there within the bottomless pit, but the unutterable anguish will have devoured their might. Death indeed is terrible. In the long struggling agony, in the wild convulsion, in the loud cry, in the catching, and the clutching of the hands, in the stifled gasp, the rolling eye, the rattling throat, the stiffening form, as the soul parts from the body, there is much of horror, much of dreadful mystery. The

Grave with its corruption, and rottenness, and worms, in which the body returns to dust, the chambers of Hades in which the lost souls expect in darkness, the approach of Judgment, are appalling. Even these terrors, however, are transitory. They have an end. Their grief has its bounds and limits. The grief which never passes, which has no bounds—this alone is worthy of the name of death, this is the reality, the substance (so to speak) of which temporal pain, sorrow, death, destruction, are the shadows. If the shadows are so terrible, what must the substance be ! if the reflections are so alarming, what must be the reality ! Surely as eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither have entered into the hearts of men the things which GOD hath prepared for them that love Him, so neither hath eye seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the hearts of men the things which GOD has prepared for them that hate Him.

Since then men in their ignorance, alienation, and blindness were plunging madly on towards that grief, He Who *knew* it, what it contains, how deep it goes down, how wide it extends, purposed in His mercy to stretch forth His saving arm, and to send into the world One Who knowing grief, its origin, and its end, might turn those who were hastening towards it right back into the path of eternal life, “even JESUS Who delivers from the wrath to come.” With this object He appointed Him Who framed darkness, and created evil and prepared hell, and Who therefore by His infinite Omniscience knew grief ; to be likewise a Man of sorrows, and so acquainted with grief in another way, namely, by experience ; to know grief in His

Manhood, in a created nature, in human flesh, and a human soul.

Grief indeed has its origin from sin. But the SON of GOD is without sin. He could not therefore take its fountain into Himself. Being, however, made in the likeness of sinful flesh, and even, as the Scriptures speak, "made to be sin for us," or dealt with as our sin, He could take into Himself all the consequences of sin except its end, and exhaust in His person all the streams which flow out of that fountain by the righteous determination of GOD in all their breadth and length, and depth, and height. "By the grace of GOD He could *taste* death for every man." Being also sinless, and so not of any necessity of righteousness liable to death, He could have, while His sufferings were altogether voluntary, a full capacity for the endurance of grief. It may be also that the union of His Manhood with His Godhead, gave to the former a sense of grief altogether passing our appreciation. Therefore we are expressly taught not only that He bore our sins, but that in a mysterious manner He bore our griefs and carried our sorrows; that He took upon Himself all the consequences of all our sins. He not only died, but *tasted* death for every man; felt it in its worst bitterness. He was made a Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief, a Man whom sorrow bruised, a Man who was all sorrows, one bruise from head to foot, in body, soul, and spirit; and Who knew all grief, every one's grief from first to last, every one's grief in all its extent, as made His, taken into Himself; not one throb omitted, not one drop wanting.

The reasons why He became a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, are chiefly, as the Scriptures signify, five.

1. To show us in some measure that we know not what grief is.

2. To certify us that sinners who continue in sin must be at last given over to grief in all its fulness.

3. To teach us that all intermediate steps of grief are not marks in individual cases of GOD's anger, but rather of His love, as tending to perfect us in obedience.

4. To assure us that GOD can enter into, and compassionate our temptations and our griefs.

5. To instruct us that JESUS will pray for us, and that His prayer is our deliverance.

1. He came to show us in some measure what grief is. For this purpose two conditions were required ; that He should show us this in such a way as would strike us, and yet not strike us into despair. Under the Gospel not only was life and immortality brought to light, but the covering also was to be removed from death and hell. "The wrath of GOD was to be plainly revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men." Therefore GOD ordained that His dear and only SON manifest in the flesh should take into His own hand of His own accord the cup which mankind had to drink, and drink it in their place, and as their Representative, and then give them in its stead His own cup, the cup of everlasting bliss. He from the suffering form of JESUS cast a light down into the bottomless pit, which obliged men to look beyond the surface. He made the SAVIOUR

to be baptized in grief, to go down into, and be lost, and disappear in grief, as men were buried in the waters of baptism, or as they sink amid the dark waves of death, that we following Him with our eyes and hearts down into the abyss of grief until we can follow Him no further, might be able to gain some conception, or at least some apprehension, of the end which sin conducts to. We might thus learn to comprehend more distinctly the wrath of GOD, and fear Him Who is able to destroy both body and soul in hell.

For first as it was fitting that He Who came to bring salvation to sinners, and teach them that, as such, they must "through much tribulation enter the kingdom of GOD," should Himself pass through that tribulation to the joy which He promised, so also was it fitting that He, [the same JESUS, Who first clearly announced the unquenchable fire and the undying worm, and the outer darkness, and the eternal death, should not be one of the bright and gay, not a sparkling angel shape, but a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. He came to seek and save that which was lost, that is, destroyed, and this was the destruction in which they were enveloped. His very coming implied it. It was fitting then that He should bring such a message in mourning garments ; that He should first "learn obedience by the things which He suffered," and be "heard in that He feared." It was fitting that His soul should be exceeding sorrowful, even unto death ; that He, in His human nature, should shrink from that tremendous baptism, and draw back from that awful cup, which He yet sought,

and accepted, and would not let go for our sakes and our deliverance.

Surely this distinct announcement of the eternal torments could not be made for the first time without a shudder. A pang that breaks the heart must lacerate the soul which apprehends it, the form which utters it. GOD "Who tranquilly judges all things"¹ in the inaccessible and unchangeable calm of His everlasting blessedness, could not, when we knew Him not, show us in Himself how judgment is His "strange work," and yet how insufferable that judgment is; how He wills not the death of sinners, and yet what an end His predestination has decreed them. But the broken heart of the Son of Man could reveal this to us. "Thy rebuke," He says, "hath broken My heart." "The rebukes of them that rebuked Thee are fallen upon Me." What is that rebuke but the eternal sentence—"Depart, ye cursed!" the rebuke of those who rebuke GOD, the condemnation of those who condemn GOD.

The effect then of this rebuke of GOD was to be shown in a mystery now in the sinless SON of GOD, in His sorrow, in His grief, which as Man He could exhibit to men. In the breaking of His heart beneath it, He signified what the rebukes of those, whose rebukes He in vain carried, will eventually be. He showed what will be the dreadfulness of each rebuke, and of the gathered rebukes of all the reprobate, how they will break the heart for eternity with an irremediable pang. "Thy breach is great as the sea! Who can heal thee?" Such is the breach of grief

¹ Deus tranquillè judicans omnia.—S. Aug.

when it breaks for ever over the lost soul and body : and therefore our SAVIOUR cries by Jeremiah : " Is it nothing to all you that pass by ? When was any sorrow like unto My sorrow, wherewith the LORD hath afflicted Me in the day of His fierce anger ? " His sorrow was to be unlike any other sorrow, His grief beyond any other grief, that we might be taught to fear that sorrow which is worse than any temporal sorrow, that grief which is beyond cure.

It was from the SAVIOUR'S affliction, from His death, and His blood, that His Scriptures were to draw one mighty argument, and " knowing the terrors of the LORD to persuade men." When the temporal judgments of GOD were denounced against transgression and transgressors, every external circumstance was calculated to increase the alarm of those who heard, and make them tremble at the " death under the law." But what force have the terrors of Sinai, the earthquake, the tempest, the blackness, the thunders, the trumpets, the voice, the flames, the " fiery law," and the stern denunciations of temporal penalties, compared with the solemn but quiet forewarning of hell from the solitary and gentle mouth, and in the " still small voice " of the Incarnate SON of GOD. Then lest this should be ineffectual, His sufferings, His Cross, were to confirm the warning of His lips, and to speak with even more convincing accents of the exceeding dreadfulness of eternal punishment. By His life and His death, by His word, and His blood, He exhibited to us what grief really is, what that sorrow is which we ought to escape.

But again, when this announcement is made, may it

not drive us to despair? Are these torments, and this grief, the decree, the appointment, the preparation of GOD, the cup which He has mixed from before the ages?

Surely all the tenderness, compassion, tears, sorrows, sufferings of JESUS were needed to render the announcement tolerable. The gracious weeping eyes, the mournful and prayerful lips, the soul exceeding sorrowful, of the bleeding Lamb of GOD could alone proclaim and attest the tremendous truth without striking us into insensibility and recklessness. They showed, that if "sin abounded, grace did much more abound," that if divine love could turn into such a "consuming fire," it would fain, even at the cost of its own life be rather a fountain of living waters to save us from that grief.

2. This then was one reason of our SAVIOUR'S sufferings, to show us as forcibly as possible, but in such a way as we could endure, what grief is. A second purpose was to declare the *certainty* that this grief would be the portion of sinners dying impenitent. Our SAVIOUR states this Himself in His speech to the sorrowing women. "If these things be done in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry?" A striking metaphorical expression of that truth which S. Peter reiterates more explicitly. "Judgment must begin at the house of GOD, and if the righteous scarcely shall be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?"

He was indeed the Green Tree, the Tree of Life, inhabited by "the fulness of the Godhead bodily," the Only-begotten SON in Whom the FATHER was

well pleased. He was the Tree Whose root and head is GOD, to Whom by eternal generation "the FATHER hath given to have life in Himself, as the FATHER hath," and to "quicken" whom He will "as the FATHER doth." He was the Tree Whose "leaves are for the healing of the nations," Whose fruits are immortality, glory, joy. Yet He was the "Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." All "these things were done in Him." Wherefore?

In order that we considering first Who He is, and then His sufferings, may join the two facts together, and argue as He Himself directs us, "If these things are done in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry?"

If this sorrow and grief are the earthly portion of the dear and beloved and only SON, the righteous, the sinless, the Eternal Life, if He must drink this cup and be baptized with this baptism, the cup whose "wine is red," the baptism which "reacheth to the neck," the cup of utter affliction and desolation, the baptism of the bitterness of death, if He Who travails not with His own, but with our salvation, has to endure such pangs, what will be the eternal and perfect anguish, when it seizes on its prey for ever? What will be the lot of the withered branch, the tree twice dead, the temple which has defiled itself, the member which has corrupted itself? What will it be to drink the unmixed wine of GOD's wrath? What to be plunged in those waves of death which overflow the head? "Where will the ungodly and the sinner appear?" "Who can dwell with the devouring fire, who can dwell with everlasting burnings?"

This is the second truth which the greatness of our SAVIOUR'S suffering enforces. It obliges men to ask themselves where they shall appear? It exhibits the certainty of GOD'S judgment, that He will by no means clear the guilty; that there will be indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, on every soul of man that doeth evil, that every one's sin, if he remains in it, "will surely find him out," and in a full return of grief. And in the breadth and length and depth and height of our SAVIOUR'S Cross, of His agony and death, the breadth and length and depth and height of that abyss of torment, over which His Cross is the one solitary bridge, are represented to us in the most startling characters.

We can scarcely behold Him thus brought forth before us, and hear the awful invitation "Behold the Man!" we can scarcely contemplate Him thus "evidently set forth crucified amongst us," without considering how great and how inevitable that wrath is from which He delivers us, at such a cost, or without acquiring the firm persuasion that the dreadful sentence must one day go forth against those who make even such sufferings void and vain, and that the impenitent and ungodly, and "all who forget GOD," must one day "be cast into hell," "suffering the vengeance of eternal fire."

3. Then when the certainty and dreadfulness of eternal judgment are thus enforced on us, we are at the same time taught that all intermediate stages of affliction, however deep they may go down, are, though in one sense consequences of sin, yet at the same time not in individual cases marks of GOD'S anger, and

tokens of His vengeance, but on the contrary signs of His mercy and evidences of His love.

Afflictions have two purposes, correction and improvement; the correction of sinners, the improvement of saints. There could be nothing in the sinless SON of GOD needing correction. In Him the FATHER proclaimed Himself well pleased. Neither in one sense could "GOD manifest in the flesh" admit of improvement. He is "JESUS the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." Nevertheless the Scriptures speak of Him remarkably, as growing in wisdom, and though He were a SON, yet "*learning* obedience through the things which He suffered," and although the Captain of our salvation, yet as "made *perfect* through suffering."

He so took our nature in all its verity into His Godhead, that in a real, although most marvellous and mysterious way, according to the economy or dispensation of GOD'S providence, He was made, and made Himself capable as of our weakness, so of our strength, as of our birth, so of our growth, as of our trials, so of our improvement, as of our wants, so of our fulness, as of our sufferings, so of our perfection, as of our humiliation, so of our exaltation. In Him then, according to this economy of grace, affliction served this one purpose of perfection. But as we are sinful, and even the saints "in many things offend all," in us every affliction must have more or less both these objects. They must be intended both to correct and improve us.

(1.) They are intended to correct us if we are living in sin. It was the famine which brought the prodigal

to his senses. In his anguish he came to himself, and when he came to himself he found that he had lost himself. "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself, but in Me is thy help." When he knew that he was lost he began to think of help. He remembered his FATHER, and his FATHER'S house. Its light, harmony, and abundance rose in his memory. The desire of re-admission to its privileges sprang up within him, and he returned.

Affliction drives us into ourselves. It does so of necessity for a little season. We are shut off from our wonted indulgences, dissipations, cares, business, by it for some brief space of time. The current of our life is dammed up. May it not be altered? God forces us into ourselves, that we may behold what we really are, what we are before the tribunal of our consciences, what we are in His sight. When we come to ourselves, we come to the need of GOD in CHRIST. He allures us into the wilderness that He may plead with us face to face, that we may feel our want of His love.

"No man cometh unto Me," said JESUS, "except the FATHER Which hath sent Me draw him," and He draws sinners to CHRIST by their affliction. If it has not this effect, it must harden them. For it is His love chastening them, warning, instructing, educating them. It is at least a sign that He has not forsaken and given them over. He has returned by it to argue, reason, expostulate, intreat with them. His love constrains them to taste of His wrath, that they may come to themselves, remember His love, and consider the blessedness of His children, and even of His hired servants, before their hearts grow hard.

And these chastisements, though tokens of GOD's wrath, are yet disarmed of their terrors and their stings, because His SON, His dear and Only One, has partaken them, and drunk deep of them. He has borne them, borne more than we have to endure. Therefore we are not excluded by their afflictions from GOD's love. If even our pains are irreversible and our grief incurable; as far as earth is concerned, if they will not pass away, but remain, still we remember that the cup did not pass from CHRIST, that He took it and drank it, though He recoiled from it. Thus we are comforted without the removal of our sorrows, by GOD's mercy and strengthening grace in them and through them.

(2.) But sufferings under the Gospel have a more glorious aspect. Their main object will be the improvement of GOD's faithful servants, their entire sanctification, their complete renewal and transformation into the image and likeness of JESUS. To suffer with CHRIST is spoken of, as a special gift of GOD, the peculiar and proper inheritance of His children. Suffering was the distinguishing mark of the Only-begotten and Well-beloved when manifest in the flesh. He was emphatically "the Man Who had seen affliction," "the Man of sorrows." And suffering since He took it unto Himself in all its extent, became thenceforward a badge of special dignity, the coat of Joseph, the many-coloured robe, the purple garment of royalty, with which GOD invests His most faithful and dear sons. The SAVIOUR'S Cup, Baptism, and Cross, are the portion of those who behold Him transfigured, who have here the sweetest tastes of His

love and communion, and who shall be nearest to Him hereafter.

“Always to carry about in the body the dying of the LORD JESUS,” and “fill up that which is behindhand in the sufferings of CHRIST for His body’s sake, which is the Church,” are the crowning “earnest of the SPIRIT, until the redemption of the purchased possession.” This is the school in which the saints learn all the higher degrees of obedience ; by these blows they are stablished, strengthened, settled. In this furnace they are made perfect. Wherefore, as in the cup of CHRIST there was under the apparent wrath of GOD everlasting blessedness, so also in the cup of His saints there is in the wine of affliction, ineffable sweetness and gladness. It is a participation of JESUS. Their tribulations join them to Him, incorporate them in His body, make them One SPIRIT with Him, destroy them to themselves that they may live to Him, and He live in them.

Again, since He Whose sorrow sank beneath all sorrows, is now raised to the height of blessedness, and He Who was set lower than all men, is now ascended far above all heavens, and He Who was rejected for the worst of criminals, is now exalted far above all principality, and power, and every name which is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come, and He Who was stripped for scourging and crucifixion, is now clothed with exceeding majesty and glory, so must we thenceforward be persuaded that every holy affection rightly endured will exalt the saints in the world to come, in proportion as it now abases and oppresses them. The

“weight of glory” will be proportioned to the weight of grief. Only it will be *eternal*. The exaltation will answer the humiliation. The reward will correspond to the loss.

Therefore in every present pain and tribulation, GOD gives His elect a fresh flower for their amaranthine crowns, a brighter hue for their everlasting robes, a deeper gaze into the Divine Beauty, a higher throne at the Lamb’s marriage feast. The more they here resemble JESUS in suffering, the more will they resemble Him hereafter in His joy. Thus CHRIST’S sorrows prove to us that all intermediate steps of grief, all sorrows short of that which has no end and no bound, are proofs and tokens of GOD’S paternal love.

CHAPTER XIII.

“A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.”—Isa. liii. 3.

THERE are, it was observed, five purposes assigned to the record of our SAVIOUR’S sufferings, three of which have been already explained.

1. It declares the dreadfulfulness of grief when completed.

2. The certainty of GOD’S judgment on ungodliness and unrighteousness.

3. It shows that all intermediate steps of grief are thenceforward marks of GOD’S love.

4. In the next place the history of the Passion teaches us that our SAVIOUR Who endured those sufferings for us, can compassionate us in ours.

JESUS was a “Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.” Even the heathen could acknowledge that they who have tasted sorrow, can pity sorrow.¹ Much more by our SAVIOUR’S affliction we are assured that “we have not a High Priest Who cannot be touched with a feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are,” and “Who therefore having suffered being tempted, is able to succour them that are tempted.”

One of the most ruinous consequences, and sorest

¹ “Haud ignara mali, miseris succurrere disco.”

judgments upon sin is, that it makes sinners "think wickedly in their hearts," that He is "even such an one as themselves." "All sinners," says S. Bernard, "remain unconverted through ignorance of GOD. For they manifestly reject Him for no other motive, than because they imagine Him unpitying and severe, when He is ever pitiful ; hard and implacable, when He is merciful ; fierce and terrible, when He is altogether lovely. Thus iniquity lies to itself, forming out of its own heart an idol like itself in the place of the Living GOD."¹ Even the servants of GOD are too often depressed in their trials, or discouraged in their shortcomings and backslidings, by a partial misapprehension of the character of GOD. They remain after a fall, or in some doubt and difficulty, complaining and murmuring at themselves, when they ought to be up and doing, because they have such inadequate views of GOD's fatherly compassion, and of the "thoughts of peace" and grace which are in His heart towards them. They will think His heart and His thoughts too like their own. They will not understand that there is no guilt which He does not long to cleanse, no infirmity into which He cannot fully enter, no temptation with which He cannot entirely sympathise.

This is a dangerous sorrow, which may increase into unbelief. CHRIST in His great goodness would remove it, and He has provided its remedy in the record of His own sorrow. For He is "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever ;" and though He is GOD, and though He is in His glory, He has not left His man's

¹ S. Bernard, Sermon. xxxviii. in Cantic. Vol. ii. 2907.

heart behind Him. GOD indeed, Who knoweth all things, could doubtless by His omniscience know all our infirmities, and has foreknown them from all eternity. GOD Who is love can compassionate them all, and be afflicted in all our afflictions. But because we were unprofitable servants, or worse, we could not, "through the ignorance which was in us," credit this blessed truth. Therefore did GOD in JESUS take a Man's heart beside His own, and fill it with His omniscience and love, that He might plainly manifest by it what was in His divine heart before ; how much compassion, how much mercy ; what unwearied tenderness, what inexhaustible affection. Therefore did He also open it to us as full of sorrow, and as knowing grief, that by our own sensations of sympathy and pity toward others, natural to us in common with Him as men, we might be persuaded that He also has sympathy and pity for us ; that He can enter into our afflictions as we enter into theirs ; feel for our temptations as we feel for theirs, only not with a limited, and feeble, and wavering compassion, such as we experience ; but with His own Divine, unbounded, unchanging, unforgetting Love—"strong as death, deep as the grave," "able to save unto the uttermost."

If our heart throbs at the spectacle of suffering, how must His melt ! If our heart distils in a few tear-drops, how must His dissolve in blood. If we thus compassionate distress into which we can only enter a little, and whose surface only we can see, how must He regard that distress which He makes His own, and the depth of which He sounds. With what pity must He behold those temptations, which, unless

He provides the remedy, must bring down the sufferer to hell.

5. Therefore CHRIST's sufferings are not only an assurance of His pity and compassion, but also of His intercession for us. For the pity of CHRIST cannot be, as our pity too often is, a transient emotion, a momentary excitement of feeling at the spectacle of misfortune or oppression, pouring a short shower from our eyelids and passing away. It is deep as His love, active as His goodness. It brought Him down from heaven. It melted Him into blood. It offered Him once on the Cross. It offers and presents Him still as on the Cross before GOD, and pleads for us in heaven all the merits of the Great Sacrifice.

If there is any cure for the grief which we behold, we are moved to bestow it by the spectacle before us. But the intercession of JESUS is the one cure, the all-sufficient remedy for all temptation and all grief. How therefore are we assured by His sorrows and sufferings that He will employ for us this all-powerful instrument of grace, this irresistible cure; for by them we *know* that He can enter into all our tribulations, that He can feel them all as His own, and pray for their relief as for His own.

Furthermore, when we recall the history of our SAVIOUR's sufferings, we cannot doubt that they are so many moving arguments by which He may effectually plead for us, and advocate our cause with success. Surely the love of our Eternal FATHER is boundless. GOD is love. Love, therefore, is infinite. Does He need any arguments beside our necessities to move His Fatherly compassion. Has He not Himself

provided the one all-sufficient argument out of His own bosom in the sacrifice of His dear and only SON, in all His bitter sufferings. But we need these arguments for our own sake ; we need the memory of our SAVIOUR'S anguish and wounds, to stir, to strengthen, to encourage our appeals. We can see in them clearly and beyond mistake arguments unutterably powerful with Almighty GOD, suited to us miserable sinners ; mighty to bring up from the gates of death, strong to draw down infinite streams of mercy, able to save unto the uttermost all who come unto GOD by Him. We can reckon in them how the Love of the SON pleads and wrestles with the Love of the FATHER ; and as we can in some degree measure by them the Love of CHRIST, we can by them in the same degree measure the Love of the FATHER also, for they are One, and their Love One.

Thus our SAVIOUR'S sufferings are proofs to us of the power and willingness of His intercession. Hence when we require it most especially, or feel our deepest need of it, in our afflictions and distresses, tribulations and temptations, when Satan rains his fiery weapons thick and fast, and heaps on his sorest buffets, we represent CHRIST to ourselves most chiefly under the aspect of suffering. We contemplate Him as the Man of sorrows.

When I name JESUS, I set before myself a Man meek and lowly of heart, kind, sober, chaste, merciful, conspicuous for all purity and holiness ; Who is also the Almighty GOD, Who can heal me by His example, strengthen me by His grace. But that is not enough. I must behold Him also clothed in rags, livid with

bruises, defiled with spittings, pale with death. Then my iniquity becomes CHRIST's, my punishment is His. I claim it no more. I say not it is "greater than can be forgiven," or "greater than I can bear." I no more call my iniquity and my punishment my own. CHRIST has taken them. Behold, He carries them. See how He pierces Himself with them.

Therefore I confidently take whatsoever I need out of the bowels of my LORD, for they flow with mercy. Neither are openings wanting through which they may gush forth. They pierced His hands, and His feet, they gashed His side with the lance ; and through these fountains "I can seek honey from the rock, and oil from the hard stone." "I can taste and see that the LORD is gracious." He thought "thoughts of peace for me, and I knew it not." "For who hath known the mind of the LORD, or who hath been His counsellor?" But the piercing nail has been an opening key to unlock and disclose the goodwill of my LORD. Why should I not look through the rent? The nail cries, the wound cries that "GOD was" truly "in CHRIST reconciling the world unto Himself." The iron passed through His soul, and His heart came near to me, that it might be unable not to compassionate my infirmities. The secret of His heart is revealed through the openings of His body. The great mystery of mercy is revealed, revealed the bowels of our GOD's compassion, "through which the day spring from on high hath visited us." For how so clearly as by Thy wounds could the truth shine forth upon us "that Thou, LORD, art tender and very pitiful!"¹

¹ S. Bernard, Serm. in Cant. Vol. 'ii. pp. 2745, 2816, 3034.

Hence flows perhaps the difference which has been often noted between early and later Christian art.

In the Catacombs and other refuges of our primitive forefathers, we see that when converted chiefly at full age, more united among themselves, more severed from the world, and sifted sharply by the fiery wind of persecution, with the dew of their baptism, and the white garments of regeneration fresh and unsullied in comparison upon them, they delighted more to depicture our blessed SAVIOUR in the quiet Pastoral or Lamb-like aspect, with the resurrection types and symbols, and few if any memorials of His anguish and death.

In after ages Christians have been mixed up with the world; temptations multiplied; scandals increased. The tares grew rapidly in the field of GOD. Men baptized in infancy felt bitterly in after life the shame and guilt of their manifold transgressions. Their defilements of themselves were defilements of CHRIST'S body; their rebellious sins against GOD'S HOLY SPIRIT, they became like crimson; they assumed ten-fold blackness; their voices of accusation waxed loud and long like the shrill wail of the trumpet upon Sinai.

Therefore later art represents the SAVIOUR, our tender but prevailing Intercessor, either as in infancy and humbled in the Incarnation, or else and most chiefly as the Man of sorrows. The nails, the lance, the crown of thorns, the pallor, the lines of anguish, the blood drops, now appear upon the canvas, thus answering truly to Christian feeling and requirement, and testifying our agonized sense of our utter need of those arguments, our haste to find refuge in the

SAVIOUR'S intercession, in the mighty pleading of His sufferings and blood.

"Behold the Man," the "Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." We think of Him thus, and then we endeavour more and more to attain to the knowledge of that sorrow which passeth knowledge, that we may attain to the knowledge of that "Love" also "which passeth knowledge," and which alone can satisfy our needs. Yet whenever we strive to gather together all the particulars of our SAVIOUR'S suffering, we are lost in its deep mystery, its fathomless abysses.

We can recount His lowly birth, His painful circumcision, His early flight, His unknown boyhood, His laborious youth. We can collect His sojourn in the wilderness, His forty days of fasting, the temptations which succeeded, the toil and weariness of His ministry, the poverty of His life, His lowliness, His houselessness. We can review the "continual contradiction of sinners," the desertion of followers, the frequent misapprehension of friends, the fickleness of the multitude, the unremitting opposition, the treacherous lying in wait of the teachers and rulers of the people, the blasphemies and revilings of the priests of God. We can represent to ourselves the great disappointment (to speak in the language of men) of being rejected by His own, His special people whom He had prepared by so long and wonderful a providence. We can follow Him, "steadfastly setting His face to go up to Jerusalem," through all dangers and all terrors. We can picture Him to ourselves looking forward with the clear vision of omniscience, and

the natural shrinking of the flesh, up the awful vista of affliction to its final consummation on the Cross.

We can endeavour to imagine what the approach of temptation, and the permitted assaults of the Tempter must have been to the Holy One of GOD. We can labour to grasp what the betrayal of Judas, the flight of the disciples, the denial of Peter, must have been to His pure soul. We may contemplate in His tears and in His prophecy to the weeping women, His bitter anguish as a citizen at the prospect of Judea's impenitence, and the impending destruction of Jerusalem. We may guess by His sharp rebuke of S. Peter, how He mastered Himself in submitting to the Cross. When it approached, we may wonder how far He allowed the power of darkness to oppress Him in its hour, and that of evil men.

We may watch Him under the silent moon, amid the shadowy trees in the garden of Gethsemane. We may mark His sinking form, His outstretched hands, His prostrate figure, His convulsed frame, His bursting woe, His streaming bloody sweat, His "soul exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." We may follow Him after His seizure, trace His repeated trials, the hurrying to and fro, the insults, the scorn, the accusations, the blinding and the buffeting, the stripping and the scourging, the sentence and the judgment. We may view Him with the thorns, and in the purple robe brought forth to be the object of universal execration. We may pursue Him with our eyes toiling, sinking, under the Cross. We may behold Him laid upon it. We may consider the rough hands of the fierce executioners, the shame of exposure, the strokes of the ham-

mers, the rending of the nails, the laceration of the flesh, the rearing up the Tree, the disjoining of the limbs, the renewed tearing of the whole frame, the continued and repeated upbraidings, howlings, mockeries pouring incessantly against Him, as He hung there the spectacle of His pitiless enemies. We may imagine the sad sight of His weeping Mother, the protracted anguish, the baffled burning thirst, the strange amazing bewilderment, the increasing darkness, the forsaking of GOD, i.e. the withdrawal of His sensible presence, the departure of all comfort, utter dereliction and desertion.

All these His sufferings in body and soul, as a man, as a Citizen, as a Son, as a Minister and Messenger of GOD, we may strive to gather together. We may study every wound of all His precious body, and every pang of His perfect soul; and still we feel that we know nothing of His suffering, of its immeasurable extent, its unsearchable depth. We feel that there were "unknown sufferings"¹ shadowed out through those which were manifest, exceeding them probably as much as His Godhead exceeds the Manhood. We feel that His sufferings as the SON of GOD making Atonement for the world, far exceed our comprehension, that in the union of all the woes of mankind in the cup which He drank, there must have been a bitterness impossible for us to appreciate or guess at, that in the perfect holiness of His body and soul there must have been an intensity of sensitiveness beyond the grasp of our experience or intellect, that the entire union of His Manhood with His Godhead may have

¹ τὰ ἄγνωστα παθήματα of Greek Lit.

imparted an infinity of pain to His affliction, that as "he who increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow," His sorrows must in some way have been co-extensive with His omniscience, that as He was Incarnate Love, His rejection and crucifixion must have been unbounded anguish to His love.

For why do these words, "A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," follow immediately on the preceding clause, "He was despised and rejected of men?" Do they not imply that His rejection by men and by His own people was the bitterest of His sorrows, and the most intimate fountain of His grief? What sharper pang does earth know, humanly speaking, than unrequited love? love centring, wasting, consuming itself upon some object, and rejected? The heart has not upon earth a more cruel anguish, a grief more difficult to encounter and endure. And when infinite love was dying to save its object, man, from eternal torments, and in its death was still rejected, rejected with scorn and contempt, and slighted for Barabbas, when in that hour of wicked men, and the power of darkness, It looked back, looked around, looked on, and foresaw the countless number of those for whom It died, still despising and rejecting It, although made Its own, redeemed, baptized in Its blood; though offered every blessing, still multiplying insults against Him Who died for them, although the only SAVIOUR, the only blessing, the only life, and the only joy, still preferring their sin and all its consequences to their GOD,—surely the terrible spectacle was the sharpest sting, and the thickest darkness to Him in that hour. It was the rejection which He was experiencing, and to experience until the end, that

went like the two-edged sword into His soul, wrung from Him the great bloody sweat, covered His eyes with the blackness of death, extorted that awful outcry of utter astonishment and desolation.

He was the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. All the sins from Adam's to Judas' pierced Him through, and slew Him. He also is the Lamb slain until the final judgment. All the sins from Judas' unto Antichrist's were before Him, and all their guilt and their afflictions and deaths were gathered in that hour upon Him.¹ He felt the anguish which each wilful sinner, and still more each sinful Christian occasioned Him. He felt each pollution with which they should pollute His holy body; each contempt which they should pour upon His precious blood; each despite which they should do unto His HOLY SPIRIT, each treading under foot of His holy Form for which they would have to pay. Every cruel heel lifted up from first to last against Him went stamping then into His heart, until it broke with the concentrated anguish.

But if these things are done in the Green Tree, what shall be done in the dry? If judgment thus begins at the Foundation of the House of God, where will it end? If the righteous scarcely shall be saved, where shall the ungodly and sinner appear? If the SAVIOUR was a Man of these sorrows, and thus acquainted with grief, what shall it be to become a man of endless sorrows, and to have to study grief through eternity and for infinity, grief without bound, without relief, without end?

¹ See Jer. Taylor, Serm. ii. 82, 83.

CHAPTER XIV.

“And we hid as it were our faces from Him. He was despised, and we esteemed Him not.”¹—Isa. liii. 3.

IN unrequited love, we said, there is the sharpest pang. The rejection of JESUS was the consummation of His sorrow. When love continues unrequited, there remains nothing but separation. To hide the face and mourn; to wander, desolate and widowed; to flee to the lonely wilderness, or the untrodden mountain peak,² and there concealed from all men, as excommunicated by creation, to feed on his broken heart, is the mourner's only refuge, the solitary consolation of his extreme and bitter disappointment.

When JESUS was rejected, His cup of woe was

¹ The marginal reading is: “He hid as it were His face from us.” And again: Heb. “As a hiding of faces from Him, or from us.”

Lowth renders it: “As one that hideth His face from us.”

Septuagint: “ὅτι ἀπέστραπται τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ ἡτιμάσθη καὶ οὐκ ἐλογίσθη.”

Vulgate: “Et quasi absconditus vultus ejus, et despectus unde nec reputavimus eum.”

Hebrew: מַחְסֵי פָנָיו מִפְּנֵי הָאֱלֹהִים.

² “Ἀνὰ τ' ἄντρα καὶ πέτρας ὥς ταῦρος

μέλεος μελέφ ποδὶ χηρέων.”

Sophoc. Œd. Tyr.

filled to the full ; He was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. Then also followed the hiding of His face. For the marginal reading, "He hid, as it were, His face from us," is beyond doubt most agreeable with the original. Lowth renders it very exactly, "He was as one hiding his face from us," with which translation the Septuagint and Vulgate, and the versions of Aquila and Symmachus, coincide. Whether the word (or affix) "*His*" is expressed or not in the Hebrew, may be questioned. Many manuscripts have it, others want it ; but then it may be supplied and understood from the context. If not, the other marginal translation, "There was, as it were, a hiding of the face or faces," could scarcely bear any other meaning. Yet the reading in our received text also admits of a profitable application ; indeed, there is little difference in fact, as the subsequent development of the words will prove.

Being therefore despised and rejected of men, a Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief, our blessed SAVIOUR was "as One hiding His face from us."

We must remember that Isaiah speaks—1st, in the name of the Jews ; 2nd, in the person of the Christian Church. How, then, are we to understand this saying, "He was as it were hiding His face from us?"

The mourner of old hid his face. When David was ascending Olivet in his mournful flight from Absalom, he and his companions bared their feet, and covered their head, weeping as they went.¹ When he was much moved, lamenting for Absalom's death, "he covered his head, and cried with a loud voice."² When Haman

¹ 2 Sam. xv. 30.

² 2 Sam. xix. 4.

was grieved at Mordecai's promotion, "he hasted to his house mourning, and having his head covered."¹ When Micah announced the extinction of prophetic light, that the sun should go down over the prophets, and the day be dark over them, "then," he adds, "shall the seers be ashamed, and the diviners confounded; yea, they shall all cover their lips."² In the grievous famine which desolated Judah, Jeremiah describes the misery of the nobles sending their children in vain to the fountains; "they were ashamed and confounded, and covered their heads."³ When Ezekiel is forbidden to exhibit any of the usual tokens of sorrow for his wife's death, he is enjoined amongst other things not to cover his lips.⁴

To cover the head, then, was a sign of deep and bitter shame or grief. The feeling, probably, was that sorrow and mourning, under the ancient dispensation, were things polluted and polluting, connected by mysterious links with the original curse, and with death, whence the common tokens of grief were forbidden to the priests.

Therefore, not only from natural emotion, but also from universal custom, among both the Jews and other Eastern nations, and indeed among the ancients generally, mourners hid their tears, and the casting down of their countenances, under their garments.⁵ They veiled their faces, to indulge and conceal their tears.

Again, and in connection, probably, with the same

¹ Esther vi. 12.

² Micah iii. 7.

³ Jer. xiv. 3.

⁴ Ezek. xxiv. 17. cf. v. 22.

⁵ "δακρῖν δ' ὑφ' εἰμάτων."—*Æschyl. Choeph.* 73.

impression, the Leper, when adjudged to be infected with leprosy, and cut off by the priest's decision from the communion of mankind, was required by the Levitical law to rend his clothes, and bare his head, and "put a covering on his upper lip, and cry, Unclean, unclean!"¹ He was to utter the sad sentence against himself with a veiled face, as if unfit to meet the gaze of his clean brethren. It is perhaps with a view to this precept that the Vulgate interprets the word stricken (verse 4) by leprous, understanding it to mean stricken with the excommunication of leprosy.

It was, then, as a mourner, and made like unto a leper, that the blessed JESUS hid His face. He veiled His glorious countenance, that He might mourn in secret over the hardness and impenitence of those who rejected Him. He concealed it under a sad shroud of humiliation and grief, that He might be excommunicated, and cast out alone into the great wilderness of death, and be dealt with as an unclean thing, and be made that of which leprosy was the type, even "our sin," "sin for us when He knew no sin," and be pronounced, not unclean only, but accursed; being made a curse for us; as it is written, "Cursed is every one that hangeth upon a tree."

When the Jews, in the hall of Caiaphas, covered His face and blindfolded Him, that they might smite and mock Him, they were unknowingly typifying this truth. Then JESUS signified, by the veil over His eyes, that He was the Great Mourner, the Great Outcast of the world, by Whom all tears shall be wiped from all faces, and all the "outcasts of Israel" shall

¹ Lev. xiii. 45.

be gathered. Their acts, although they knew it not, were prophetic. That helpless Mourner, the Outcast, the Criminal, as they judged Him, was all the while fulfilling by them His own words. "The LORD GOD hath spoken, who will not prophesy?" Even Pilate, even Caiaphas, even all His murderers.

Again, when they covered His face, it was because He was then hiding it from them. Little did they imagine what their own act signified; for the veil upon JESUS' face was the veil upon their hearts. It could not dim His sight; it could not diminish His glory. Even in that hour GOD was glorifying His SON, "crowning Him with glory and honour, that by the grace of GOD He might taste death for every man." But the veil upon His face was judicial; it was their judgment and condemnation. For "this is the condemnation, that the Light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil." The veil was their love of darkness; they chose it, and they had it. It was the blinding of their own eyes, and the endless concealment and burial of their glory. Priesthood, sacrifice, temple, people, law, all were then hid and veiled out of GOD's sight for ever.

Another Light, the Glory which excelleth, the Lamb as it had been slain, the True Priesthood, Sacrifice, Temple, People, Law, were then coming up before Him in their eternal and irremovable Majesty, in their exceeding, over-abounding glory. His ancient Israel, with all its transitory privileges, with all its limited and passing glory, was then going out in the darkness of its sin. The solitary lamp, which He had kindled and kept burning in Jerusalem, was about to

quench itself in the Blood of JESUS, that the flame might shoot up again in His Resurrection, and enlighten the dark places of all the earth, and illuminate the New Jerusalem for ever.

Israel knew not that their GOD was in JESUS, then hiding His face from them, that they might see it no more. There stood the Great Mourner, covering His countenance, that He might weep His last tears over their utter apostasy. As they cast Him out, hiding His lip, and crying, Unclean, unclean, they knew not that they were casting themselves out, and pronouncing the dreadful sentence of uncleanness against themselves and their children. "Through ignorance they did it, as did also their rulers." "They that dwelt in Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew Him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath day, fulfilled them in condemning Him." They knew not—even their instigators, the evil spirits, knew not—the great mystery of godliness, which none of the princes of this world knew ; for "had they known it, they would not have crucified the LORD of Glory."

The veil on JESUS' face represented the hiding of His countenance from the Jews ; it represented the veil upon their hearts, namely their ignorance. But that ignorance was judicial ; it was the work of their own froward ways. Their own hands bound the covering over our LORD'S eyes ; their own evil wills fastened the veil upon their own hearts. They thought to blindfold the eyes of JESUS, that they might mock Him ; they only blindfolded their own understandings for ever.

But it was also the act of GOD, giving them over to

“a reprobate mind,” to the darkness which they loved; withholding from them that illumination of faith, that gift of grace, by which alone we can name JESUS LORD. Hence it comes to pass that the interpretation, “We hid as it were our faces from Him,” conducts us to the same practical issue.

CHRIST hid His face from those who had first hid their faces from Him. In hiding their faces from Him, they hid His face from them. They would not look to Him and be saved; they would not come to Him, that they might have life. Therefore, eight hundred years before, GOD had given the commandment to His messengers, “Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes, lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed.” He announced the judicial blindness to which He should give them over, as in contempt and scorn they hid their faces from Him, when He would smite them with such total ignorance, that notwithstanding the manifest fulfilment of all Scripture, and the exact accomplishment of every prediction often through their own instrumentality, they would crucify their King, and reject their GOD, while He, that they might do so, should hide His face from them.

Thus this judicial blindness was a veil between their face and GOD’s face; that is, between their heart and the knowledge of GOD, and the right understanding of everything that comes from GOD. It was between them and their law. They could not see into their

law, nor discern its glory, which is to lead to CHRIST. "Even unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their heart ;" and that veil is only done away in CHRIST, by recognising CHRIST in the law, and the law in CHRIST. Therefore it is added, "Nevertheless, when it shall turn to the LORD, the veil shall be taken away."

When the silver mirror is turned to the sun, it is then illuminated itself, and reflects also the splendour which it receives. When a heart returns to the LORD, it is illuminated with His truth, and reflects His glory likewise.¹ The heart of the Jew thus enlightened would shed the light thus received upon His law also, which before was dark. CHRIST would then appear to him in it, as the great Truth hidden in the Law, its life and its spirit, and informing it with the full beams of His Majesty, and turning priesthood, temple, people, sacrifice, commandments into their proper lustre, as the Dawn of His Arising.

But the Prophet speaks not in the person of the Jewish nation alone. His voice is also that of the Christian Church. He gives utterance to her lament over the multitude of the ungodly. He pronounces for all ages, and all countries whither the knowledge of the Gospel has extended, that exceeding mournful truth which follows on our SAVIOUR'S treatment in the world, that He is always as One hiding His face from us.

Treating these words then, generally, and in their spiritual application, we must consider more exactly the force and connection of the several terms.

1. What is the face of JESUS?

¹ S. Chrys. in 2 Cor. iii. 18.

2. What is its hiding?

And as is needful for a clear explanation of the terms,

3. How is it seen ; what is its revelation or unveiling?

I. The first term to be considered is the Face of JESUS.

This cannot mean His bodily face. For, first, in His humiliation the Jews and all His murderers saw this face. They saw it, and spat upon it. "He hid not His face from shame and spitting." Neither can it mean the same face as it is in heaven, such as the Apostles beheld it, shining as the Sun in the Transfiguration, as the Sun in its strength in the Apocalypse. For He had not put on this glory, at least permanently, until after His victory over death. This also they might perhaps have seen, as their forefathers had seen the brightness of Moses' countenance, or as Manoah's wife the countenance of the Angel, very terrible, with their bodily eyes. But the veil was not over their eyes. It was on their hearts.

To see His visible glory might still have been only to know JESUS after the flesh : and the "flesh profiteth nothing ;" as even as S. Paul testifies, "Though we have known JESUS CHRIST after the flesh," by such a manifestation of His Manhood in glory, "yet henceforth know we Him no more." Another revelation is spoken of. "GOD that commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of GOD in the face of JESUS CHRIST." The face, therefore, of JESUS has a spiritual interpretation ; and is both discerned

and reflected in the heart ; and can only be seen by the illumination of GOD.

If we seek further the force of the term, it has been defined¹ His presence in the Church, or the power by which He becomes known to those who are worthy. For as CHRIST is the head of the Man, so is GOD the head of CHRIST. His face therefore may be again defined the Manifestation of His Godhead. Taking one step further, "GOD is love," and "He that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in GOD and GOD in him." As a man is known when his face is seen, so is GOD known when His love is understood. If then the Godhead is Love, Love is the Face of GOD, and therefore the Face of CHRIST.

This agrees with the former definitions ; for CHRIST's love is His presence in the Church. Since the Church is His body, they are convertible terms ; for no man hateth his flesh, but loveth and cherisheth it even as the LORD the Church. And His love shed abroad in our hearts is that power by which He makes Himself known to those whom He counts and makes worthy to know Him, as He says, "He that loveth Me shall be loved of My FATHER, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him ;" and S. John says, "Every one that loveth is born of GOD, and knoweth GOD," and "we love Him because He first loved us."

For neither,² says S. Ambrose, shall the unworthy see GOD, nor shall he, who is unwilling to see GOD, be able to see GOD. It is not with the bodily eyes, or through the bodily senses, that we see or desire GOD. The vision of the mind, rather than of the eyes, is set

¹ S. August. iv. 814 and 137.

² S. Amb. ii. 604.

before us. For he who hath learned what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, of the love of CHRIST which passeth knowledge, has seen CHRIST, and hath seen the FATHER also. When therefore we are taught that no man can see GOD's face and live, and that no man hath seen GOD at any time, we are instructed that no one, at least in this life, can see or discern Him in His substance, or fully grasp His immeasurable love.

Here we see as in a glass darkly, in a mirror and an enigma, and through faith. Hereafter we shall be like Him, seeing Him as He is, being "made equal to the angels," who "always behold the Face of their FATHER Which is in heaven." Even then, however, although we shall see Him as He is, we shall not be able to comprehend Him, to see His infinite fulness even with our spiritual eyes. For "He dwelleth in the light which no one hath approached to, whom no one hath seen, or can see." "No man knoweth the SON but the FATHER, and no man knoweth the FATHER save the SON, and he to whom the SON will reveal Him."

In heaven there will be the vision of the Face of CHRIST Incarnate in Glory. There will also be a vision of His Face as GOD, and in His Face, of the Face of the FATHER, and the SPIRIT, for they are One. The former for the bodily eyes, the latter for those of the spirit. But what except love, can see love? In the perfection of their love, the saints will see Him Who is Love perfectly. His Spirit Who knows the deep things of GOD, and Who is shed abroad in perfect love within them, will reveal Him to them in their spirit. For "GOD is a Spirit," and "they who

are joined to the LORD are one Spirit." Thus he who can see GOD without sight, can be joined to GOD without bodily incorporation¹—even by love, love received from, and returning to, and resting in GOD.

Therefore perfect love is the perfect manifestation of GOD, promised to those who are like GOD, that is, to the holy and the pure. The sight of GOD, the fountain of spiritual joy, is the especial beatitude of the pure. It is not the recompense of any other grace. It is the peculiar reward of Purity, and purity of heart. Hereafter in heaven all will be perfectly pure; nothing which defiles can enter there. Therefore all will partake this great sight. Is it begun here?

When the love of GOD in CHRIST begins to draw any heart, at that instant He begins to show Himself. As the love of GOD, and CHRIST as the revelation of that love, shines into the heart more and more, it purifies it more and more; and as it purifies it, it imparts to it that strength, that sense of CHRIST'S presence in His Church, that precious knowledge of GOD in CHRIST, by which it is enabled and persuaded to look more intently, and meditate more devoutly on His Face; on all the wonderful longsuffering, on all the unutterable mercies, on all the inexhaustible compassions, on all the unspeakable promises, on all the guiding wisdom, on all the Fatherly tenderness, brotherly affection, consoling sympathy; in short, on all the features and evidences of Eternal Love, which beam forth from it in more than heavenly excellency and beauty. It feels more and more every day the meaning of that saying, "He that hath seen Me hath

¹ S. Augustine.

seen the FATHER." It comprehends more distinctly by every fresh accession of gladness how while no man hath seen GOD at any time, yet the Only-begotten SON Who is in the bosom of the FATHER, He hath declared Him, and how it is not flesh and blood which hath revealed it to him, but the FATHER Which is in heaven, in the manifestation of His SON.

"It is through Him that we gaze into the heights of the heavens, through Him that we see as in a mirror His spotless and most High Countenance. Through Him the eyes of our hearts are opened; through Him our foolish and darkened understanding springs up into His wonderful light; through Him has the LORD willed that we should taste the immortal knowledge."¹

Thus our heart through CHRIST Incarnate and crucified ascends more and more into that great Truth represented in His title, the Word of GOD—a Word, which is not a sound entering in the ear, but an Image revealing itself to the heart, that it may shine there with an inward and ineffable light, not only in that Form which He took in His humiliation, but in that Form which is the SON of GOD, and in which He thought it no robbery to be equal with GOD; and not only in the glory which He received and took after His Resurrection, but in the glory which He had with the FATHER before the world was. Thus there is a vision of GOD in CHRIST vouchsafed to His saints here, an inshining of His presence,

¹ S. Clemens Rom. 1 Ep. ad Cor. c. xxxvi. The word *ἐνοπτριζόμεθα* may mean that we mirror, or see in a mirror, as translated above.

giving them a knowledge of the glory of GOD in the face of JESUS CHRIST.¹ It is not seen in place, but in the pure heart. It is not sought after with bodily eyes, nor circumscribed by the sight, nor felt by the touch, nor heard by its steps. When absent it is in the mind, when present it is invisible. It alters not, and yet is ever new ; unchanging, yet always unfolding fresh beauties ; slaying, yet quickening ; consuming, yet imparting a better life ; casting the spirit down into dust and ashes before it, and yet lifting it, in a manner, into the highest heaven.

It can withdraw us from the world and “allure us into the wilderness,” that GOD may there “plead with us face to face.” He sets us alone with Him by it : “Whom have I in Heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire in comparison of Thee.” By it He makes us feel that nothing is worthy to be compared with Him ; that there is none good, save One. What say GOD’s faithful followers of this vision ? for how shall we speak of it ourselves ?

“O true place of peace, not undeserving the name of bridal chamber, in which GOD is beheld not as moved with wrath, or disquieted with care, where we encounter His good, perfect, and acceptable will.” This vision does not terrify. It soothes. It does not arouse our anxious curiosity, but allays it. It does not weary, it tranquillizes the feelings. Here is true repose. GOD in His Peace, spreads peace all around. To behold Him at rest, is to rest. You see the King, so to speak, after the day-long pleadings of all the various causes upon earth, the crowds dismissed, with-

¹ S. Ambr. ubi sup.

drawing from all cares, seeking His rest for the night, entering His chamber with the few, whom He counts worthy of His privacy and familiarity, resting more completely as in His own retiring-place, serener of aspect, as only looking on those whom He loves. If any of you have been wrapt and hidden in this secret sanctuary of GOD, so that no sense of want, no pricking care, no gnawing sin, nor, which are yet more difficult to put away, any thronging phantasms of corporeal images, could at all distract or disturb you, then may you glory and say, "The King hath brought me into His chamber."¹

"If thou wouldst speak or hear of GOD aright, leave the body, and thy bodily senses, quit earth, quit sea, set air beneath thee, outstrip the boundaries of time, the ordinances of the seasons, outsoar the stars, and all their wonders, their order, their magnitude, the ministries which they fulfil, their harmony, their splendour, their relations, and their motions. Overpass all with thy mind. Mount heaven and ascending above it, gaze around with pure thought, on all the unutterable beauties, the heavenly armies, the angelic choirs, the archangelic dignities, the glorious dominations, the exalted thrones, the virtues, principalities, powers.

"Pass on ! let thy mind mount up above every creature. Exalting thy spirit higher still, consider the Divine Nature abiding, unalterable, unchangeable, impassible, simple, uncompounded, indivisible, light inaccessible, power unspeakable, greatness illimitable, glory exceeding, goodness most amiable, beauty in-

¹ S. Bernard, ii. 2803.

conceivable, enrapturing with mighty vehemence the wounded soul, but which words are inadequate even to shadow forth. There is the FATHER, the SON, and the HOLY SPIRIT, the Nature uncreate, the Royal Majesty, the substantial Goodness."¹ There is the Face of GOD.

If the tumult of the flesh is hushed, if the phantasms of the earth, the seas, the air are hushed, if the heavens are hushed, and the mind itself is hushed, and passes out of itself by an oblivion of itself, if dreams and revelations of the imagination are hushed, and every tongue, and every sign, and all things transitory are altogether hushed: since all these can only cry, to whosoever hears them, We made not ourselves, but He Who abideth for ever; if having thus spoken they are silent as soon as they have elevated the ear to Him Who made them, and He alone speaks, not through them, but by Himself, so that we hear His Word, not by the tongue of flesh, nor by the voice of an angel, nor by the sound of a cloud, nor by an enigma of a vision, but if we hear Him Whom we love in these, speaking Himself without them, even as we now raised ourselves, and reached with rapid thought the Eternal Wisdom that abideth above all: if this is continued, and all other visions of far unequal nature are withdrawn, and this one sight ravishes and absorbs and buries its beholder in the innermost abysses of joy, so that his life should be for ever, such as was that moment of understanding, after which we panted: is not this to "enter into the joy of thy LORD?" Is not this the revelation of the face of CHRIST?²

¹ S. Basil, ii. 183.

² S. Aug. Confess. ix. 10.

“For this is the work of him who is made perfect in knowledge, to commune with GOD through the great High Priest, conforming himself to the LORD to the utmost of his ability, by all possible attendance upon GOD, by setting forward the salvation of men, by a perpetual interchange of kindness, and by solemn worship, and by holy doctrine, and by all good works. Then the knowledge which is in love keeps transmuting the soul which is kindred to it, and made divine and holy, and promotes the pure heart by its own proper light through all the mystical stages until it brings it to the highest dwelling-place of peace, the continual contemplation of GOD. For loving GOD Who is absolutely One, he becomes perfect and a friend of GOD, and is reckoned in the rank of a son, being altogether purified, and counted worthy, as the Scripture speaks, to see Almighty GOD face to face. For being made altogether spiritual in the spiritual Church, he abides in the peace of GOD.

“And such an one even here is in a manner made equal to the angels. For continually changing for the better, he presses on into the FATHER’S abode, through the holy week of life into the LORD’S blessed rest, there to be, if we may dare say so, a burning and a shining light set for ever in the firmament, altogether indefectible. For surely it is impossible that one made perfect through love, and banqueting without end and without satiety in the inexhaustible delight of the contemplation of GOD, should ever take pleasure in the low and creeping objects of earth. What can move him to revert to terrestrial joys, who has been admitted to the inaccessible light, if not yet

in time and place, yet by that revelation of love, which insures the inheritance, and the perfect renovation ?

“His life is all one holy festival. Every day and every night he exults in speaking of and doing GOD’s commandments. In the morning and at noontide, walking, and sleeping, and dressing, and undressing, he is inseparable from the will and the hope of GOD ; he is ever praising Him like the holy creatures whom Isaiah images ; in every trial he cries with holy Job, The LORD gave and the LORD hath taken away, blessed be the name of the LORD ; he comprehends the word of holiness, and all the divine institutions, and all the dispensations of GOD. Surmounting all impediments, and treading as dross all the material elements which beset him, he chooses heaven, and passing all spiritual creatures, all authority and principality and power, he enters the Holiest, and reaches the Supreme Throne, desiring Him alone, Who has granted him to know Him. There he rests in the calm of His goodness, wisdom, power, in His all-embracing, all-satisfying, all-forgiving love.”¹

This blessedness is not to be obtained perfectly, neither can it be retained long in this present life. It is a foretaste of the world to come. The glimpse however into this glorious vision inflames us to yearn and strive for its perfection hereafter. “He that eateth shall yet be hungry, and he that drinketh shall yet be thirsty.” The face of GOD shining on us continually draws our face toward His. His love by its revelation attracts and increases our love. The whole virtue which leads to blessedness is only the surpass-

¹ S. Clem. Alex., p. 726, 7, 8, &c.

ing love of GOD. We cannot love Him fully, solely because we cannot fully see Him. The more you love, the higher you ascend. You become more and more certain of that which is the only thing of which you can be certain, namely the love of CHRIST. As you gain this assurance you are weaned from all inferior affections. You feel that your love must be devoted to Him Who has loved you so much. A necessity is laid upon you ; you cannot help it. " You seek for Him by love, search for Him by love, knock for Him by love. By love He is revealed, by love you abide in the blessed revelation."¹ The only measure, said S. Louis, of our love of GOD is to love Him without measure.²

Then also the love of GOD in CHRIST becomes the continual spring and source of our whole life. Even our grief and sorrows flow forth from it, and therefore cannot mar our peace or joy. He is afflicted in our afflictions. Our tears are His gift, and they drop upon His bosom, and He will one day wipe them all away with His own hand, that His own joy may be on our faces for ever, spotless, undecaying, eternal. He will then clothe us upon with immortality, and change even our vile bodies, that they may be like unto His glorious body, and as He will then be all in all, He will bestow on us in Himself in all their infinite fulness all those good things which eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, but which He hath prepared for them that love Him.

¹ S. Aug., i. 1325.

² Michelet, Hist. iv. ; the saying is from S. Augustine, ii. 419.

CHAPTER XV.

“And we hid as it were our faces from Him. He was despised and we esteemed Him not.”—Isa. liii. 3.

SUCH then seems the meaning of that expression in this text, and in many other Scriptures, the face of CHRIST, namely, the glory of His Godhead and the revelation of the FATHER in it. And this is the manifestation of divine love in its breadth, length, depth, and height, filling us with all the fulness of GOD. The explanations of this phrase which we have gathered from Holy Scripture, and from the writings of ancient men of devotion, will enable us better to understand the meaning of the hiding of JESUS' face.

It is a terrible judgment; the extremity of condemnation. “For this is life eternal to know Thee the only True GOD, and JESUS CHRIST Whom Thou hast sent.” To miss this knowledge which is only to be found in the face of CHRIST is to miss eternal life. “For if our Gospel be hid, it is hid in them that are lost, in whom the god of this world hath blinded the eyes of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of CHRIST Who is the image of GOD should shine unto them.” Whatsoever is summed up in the word *lost* follows in the end on the hiding of His countenance; and how much is contained in it!

even the immeasurable agony. O, that it may not be our portion.

For the LORD is always in His Church. His face, His love are in it. It is bone of His bone, and flesh of His flesh. But the LORD in His Church is always as "one hiding His face" from the world. His face indeed is ever shining throughout it. For "the light shineth in darkness." But the most part, being darkness, comprehend Him not. They will not seek for the true Light. They do not desire it. They love the darkness of forgetfulness or self-deceit. They have no wish to see and understand the love of CHRIST. It troubles them as the blessed face of JESUS troubled the rulers and scribes, as His glory in the face of Stephen disturbed the council. "They gnashed upon him." It rebukes them. They would much rather never discern His goodness which is a perpetual reproach to them, nor His love which is a continual upbraiding of their unthankfulness. Therefore He hides His face, and because He hides it they are insensible to their misery. For it is only in His Light that we can see light. When His face is hid, man's light is quenched. Their understanding is taken away. They walk on still in darkness. He strives long with sinners, but not for ever. "If ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins." When His love is rejected He veils it; He hides His face. And how soon is it done!

"Onè little turn of the eye sets a man either in the sun or in the shadow of his own body."¹ As long as he looks toward the former he is instantly illuminated;

¹ S. Basil, ii. 112. See the whole Sermon.

as soon as he turns away toward the shadow he must of necessity be in gloom. For our face is the consciousness of our heart, and how little a matter will come between this and our GOD ; and if the consciousness of our heart be its face, its eye is its love ; and even as the face follows the eye, so does the consciousness of our heart follow its love. One turn of the face changes our direction. One bias of affection alters our heart perhaps for years, perhaps for eternity. What then is the hiding of CHRIST's face, but insensibility to His love ? and what renders us insensible to His love, but the engrossing love of some inferior object ?

Here we perceive the connection between the various translations of the text ; the hiding His face from us is the hiding our faces from Him. It is the aversion of our love toward His creatures, rendering us first unconscious of His love, and then increasing upon us and engrossing us, until it ends in a total and entire alienation from Him ; when He hides His face from us judicially, and leaves us to our own wilful blindness, to a seared conscience, to a hardened heart, "fixed in our worldly works as in our own shadow."¹

"If any man love the world, the love of the FATHER is not in him." We can no more look two opposite ways at one moment, than we can pre-eminently love two objects at the same time. This is what our SAVIOUR intends to show us when He assures us, that if we do not hate our dearest relatives, and our own life also, for His sake and the Gospel's, we cannot be His disciples.

¹ In carnali opere tanquam in umbrâ defiguntur suâ.—S. Aug.

The sight of GOD is the beatitude promised to purity of heart. Any earthly affection, intercepting our communion with CHRIST, is so far a defilement. For our purity is GOD's grace; His indwelling presence abiding in our hearts; the well of water which flows forth from under the throne in the heaven of heavens, "springing up into eternal life." It is also like a stream of light beaming forth upon us, and reflected in us, and illuminating our whole soul and body. But if anything comes between the sun and the object which it illuminates, at the instant that object becomes dark. It is hidden from the sun, the sun hidden from it.

The impurity of the heart is its veil; and it may be described as on the heart itself, or on the face of GOD, which it conceals from the heart, according as we consider it either as an act of the will, or an effect following judicially on that act; just as we might attribute the dimness of an eclipse to the sun's hiding itself behind the moon, or to the moon's intercepting its lustre.

What a fearful character, therefore, is thus stamped upon impurity. For all sin is impure, as all evil spirits are called unclean or impure spirits; and all sin separates from GOD, as the evil spirits are all separated from Him. But the particular consequence of sin, which produces this separation, is its impurity, its defiling effect upon the heart. Sin may bring forth this result more speedily, or more tardily, but its tendency to do so is immediate; and in proportion as the impurity is more forcibly developed in any act of sin, so will the darkness which is contracted by it be increased.

One act of such sin *may* hide GOD's face for ever.

There are three kinds of sin in particular to which this darkening and obscuring effect is especially attributed by Holy Scripture ; these are—(1) unchastity, (2) worldliness, (3) self-righteousness ; and all these are thoroughly defiling and impure, although they act by different ways in corrupting the heart.

GOD has created us for pleasure and joy, but for spiritual pleasure and heavenly joy ; that is, for Himself, the Fountain of all delight, “in Whose Presence is the fulness of joy, and at Whose Right Hand there are pleasures for evermore.” But unchastity is the substitution of carnal joy and pleasure in the place of GOD, as the chief object of desire. It therefore at once brings down the mind from heaven to earth, from the SPIRIT to the flesh. Instead of the body being subject to the soul, the soul throws itself altogether into the flesh, and becomes as entirely flesh as it can, in order to obtain as much of its hideous joy and pleasure as possible. Every sense of the body becomes an avenue for further uncleanness into the heart.

Thus the mind imbrutes itself more and more ; the desire at once engrosses it every time any object calculated to awaken it is presented to it. It carries the impulse away into solitude and silence. There it broods over it, till the flame is continually augmented. Every indulgence nourishes it, as the fuel does the fire. The fearful delight increases upon it, and by-and-by becomes almost a necessity. The heart cannot rest ; the body itself torments it. A miserable sense of want is at last produced, as insatiable as our natural appetites, as hunger or thirst. Then yet further, it feels a horrible pleasure in kindling the same

feelings and desires in others, however vile and contemptible they may be. So thoroughly does it debase the intention of the mind, and bring it down below that of brutes, to the level of unclean spirits.

This impurity also softens and makes effeminate the whole character. It produces a sort of fictitious tenderness and watchfulness to please, but never for good. It gives occasion to many apparent sacrifices for the object of its attachment, which yet in reality are acts of purest selfishness : thus it engenders habits of easy self-deceit. After a season, it produces a disinclination to hard exertion. It enfeebles the resolution ; it undermines the understanding, as it has before perverted the affections. It weakens the will altogether, so that it cannot apply itself earnestly to any particular business ; it produces feelings of regret and remorse, but regret which is idle, and remorse which is ineffectual. Thus it engenders a habit of stifling all convictions of conscience, and calls to repentance.

The heart persuades itself at last that it cannot help its sin ; or, as it is often, in the beginning of its career, easily moved, and full of compassion and sympathy, that it makes up for it by benevolence and charity. Or it even dares to multiply devotions ; and as it is excitable, and easily roused to ardent and eager emotion, it seems to itself to take pleasure in solemn acts of worship, or in rapturous words of praise and thanksgiving, or in unreal, but vehement, humiliations and supplications. And after these, yea, perhaps, in the midst of these, indulges itself in the plainest violations of the laws of chastity, and even tempts those whom it affects and believes to be assisting heavenward.

There is no limit to the perversion of reason, the obliquity of understanding, the insensibility of conscience, the thorough defilement of body, soul, and spirit, the complete aberration from all principles of true religion, and even from all rules of common fairness and common sense. There is no bound to the tremendous inconsistency which may result from the indulgence of unchastity,—from one taste of sinful pleasure, opening, as it were, a new world of delight to the heart, and thus corrupting it in every point, and leading it on by swifter or slower, but sure degrees, to the depth of utter degradation, and complete spiritual blindness.

II. The next form of impurity is worldliness. This indeed is not unfrequently—rather is very often—the result of unchastity in youth. Many in their youth commit these sins, which the world never hears of, or else is accustomed to make light of. They committed them, and forgot them. Afterwards they settled in life ; they became ambitious, or they married, or they were engrossed by their business. That love of unchaste pleasure no longer occupied them ; but they have never repented of it, never shuddered at it, never loathed it. They are no more tempted by it ; they have ceased from indulging it ; and they have forgotten it, and forgotten also—or rather, they have never observed—the effect which it has had upon them. They do not perceive how much their standard of morality has been lowered ; how much unreality in religion has resulted from it. They do not discern that they have taught themselves to be self-deceivers, that they have weakened their powers of resolution and self-govern-

ment. They imagine (if they think at all about the matter) that they have repented of their sin because they have forsaken it, and that GOD has forgiven them because they have forgiven themselves : an easy task, in general. All the while, they have only substituted some other earthly object in the place of their evil lust, and are devoting to it that affection, and those powers which were created, and are intended, for GOD alone. They therefore mistake their decency for purity, their respectability for religion, the alteration of their manner of life for genuine conversion.

Self, however, is their object still, though under another and less outwardly foul aspect. But whether this worldliness is the result of such unchastity or not, it is certainly impure, and as such darkens' and even blinds the heart entirely ; and, alas ! it is common ! " Many walk," cried the Apostle, even in his own day, " of whom I have told you before, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the Cross of CHRIST, whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things."¹ They are shamefully impure, and the effect of this impurity is that lamentable and ruinous separation from GOD. For in them " the god of this world hath blinded the eyes of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of CHRIST, Who is the Image of GOD, should shine unto them."² The Gospel is hid in the lost, because their eyes are wilfully blinded.

In what way does the god of this world accomplish this fatal end ? A mind obscured by unchastity is

¹ Phil. iii. 18.

² 2 Cor. iv. 4.

like a man consumed by a raging fever; the disorder has a rapid course. If not cured by strong remedies, it soon eats up and destroys the heart. Even the common faculties of the soul, memory, understanding, will,—all fail; the body itself is wasted. How soon, then, is the conscience darkened! how soon are its eyes blinded! Strong and early remedies are indeed needed.

But a slow, withering consumption is an even more fatal disease. Its very insidiousness renders it more perilous; its slow, withering power makes it more incurable. The effect of worldliness on the heart is like that of consumption on the body: more die of it than of unchastity. From contact with the world, the heart receives a little rust, invisible, unfelt at the beginning; but the disorder has entered into its life's springs, and there it abides. It does not reveal itself in any particular acts of sin, or even in violent passions: the heart is scarcely conscious that it is becoming alienated from GOD. It has, perhaps, one or two warnings from conscience, when it is rejecting quietly the urgent and pressing calls of the LORD; but it silences them under the weight of its distractions, without much difficulty, and without much remorse.

So with a silent, imperceptible progress, the disorder extends itself; and the power of the heart to receive spiritual impressions, and to lift itself toward GOD in spiritual acts, gradually diminishes. There is no striking alteration in the character or conduct of the worldly man; but the stature and vigour of his soul dwindle away. He in religion grows wan and lean, irresolute and feeble. He forms, perhaps, good resolutions which come to nothing, undertakes reli-

gious practices, but has not strength to go through with them. There is every now and then a hectic colour on his heart, a flush of piety and devotion, a fitful excitement, irregular and unnatural, deceiving those around him, and cheating him himself. It passes ; he is wanner and weaker than before.

Then he grows more satisfied with his life, as the consumptive patient flatters himself when the disease is over-mastering him. His view of worldly objects becomes more clear, distinct, and intense ; and his view of spiritual truths becomes still more vague, uncertain, and shadowy. The face of the world shines to him as full of beauty and life. If he ever meets the LORD,—if sometimes “in the cool of the day,” when the excitement of his earthly occupations is over, he finds GOD near him, in his heart and his conscience, and is constrained to look upon Him, and reason with Him there, his view of GOD is altogether unreal, according to the dimness of his understanding, and the obscuracion of his conscience.

He, for the most part, “saith in his heart, There is no GOD ;” and when, under strong constraint, he is compelled to acknowledge Him, then “he thinks wickedly that GOD is such an one as himself.” Instead of reflecting upon his heart the light and likeness of GOD’S countenance, he throws the likeness of himself as a veil over the face of GOD. He transfers his own easiness and unconcern, his own erroneous views of holiness and sin, to the Living GOD, Whose Name is Jealous. Therefore he fancies that GOD will suffer him to trifle with his salvation, to play with time, and amuse himself with the talents entrusted to him ; to

make a jest of holy things ; to please himself, or aggrandize himself, at the expense of his soul, and be ignorant of the value of eternity ; that He will accept the dregs and lees of life, the miserable time of extreme age or sickness, which are all that he intends to offer to his GOD. Or, perhaps, under sorer constraint, or when those days of vexation and weariness are arrived, being obliged to view and reason with his GOD, he displays the same wretched ignorance.

When the sun is in eclipse, it is terrible ; “from behind the moon shedding disastrous twilight.”¹ When the worldly meet their GOD, Whose face is hid from them through sin, they figure behind that veil a dreadful and inexorable countenance, an austere, unpitying aspect, portending wrath. The “thoughts of peace” which shine forth in that Fatherly Aspect approach them like the lightnings of inevitable judgment. The flame of infinite Love ready to consume their sin, seems a flame of wrath about to devour them. They shrink, they flee when their FATHER is hasting toward them.

They are unwilling to know GOD as He is ; they would not see His face in its real characters ; they are in love with that which must perish ; they have taken refuge in that which must deceive them ; they have laid up their treasure, which is dust and ashes, amidst worms and rottenness. It must vanish into smoke, or turn into torments. In GOD’s face, indeed, there is infinite Love ; but there are also light and truth. They cannot endure the light, and they loathe the truth. Therefore GOD permits them to hide His face from themselves, that they may persist

¹ Milton, *Par. Lost*.

in despising and rejecting Him. He suffers them judicially to harden their hearts against His love, and thus to mistake and misapprehend His nature.

Wherever the worldly man looks, he still sees self ; self in some shape or other is the object of his desire. Wheresoever he gazes it still meets him, and he knows not what it is ; for he knows not himself. Wheresoever he directs the eyes of his mind, he still beholds self, even in the face of GOD, which sheds an ominous and lurid light, showing the worldly man himself, and yet not revealing who it is. And whensoever he thus sees self, he despises and loathes it ; for he is indeed contemptible and loathsome. He cannot bear the true sight of himself ; he goes out of himself,—that is, out of serious consideration as soon as possible. He gladly returns to the gross darkness of Egypt, “being to himself more grievous than that darkness.” No ; he cannot endure the sight of himself as he is before GOD ; for no one loves to contemplate impurity. The impurity, therefore, becomes a thick, impenetrable covering between the aim of his heart, and the love of GOD, which would convert him ; and therefore he is always hiding his face from GOD, and GOD also is as One hiding His face from him, by leaving him to his own wilful ignorance and selfishness.

Thus, as the declining patient fades and decays, until he is but as a shadow, and dies so slowly, that you can scarcely mark the stages of declension, or the moment of departure ; so the worldly man gradually droops and pines away. Disappointments multiply ; all things disappoint him ; yet he has no taste for any other more substantial life. He misses the living

waters, and the hidden manna. He catches and clutches at the shadows which are eluding his grasp, as the hectic patient grasps at the various and strange remedies which are offered him. He cannot believe that all will be over soon ; that he must actually be parted from the world, with which he seems incorporated : much less that he has any interest in another world beside that which has seemed so real to him. He retains, for the most part, his ignorance to the last, and dies too often with a lie upon his lips.

There are various phases and forms of worldliness. There is the refined worldling, and the worldly man of business or labour. The first is a man of elegance and taste. He has gentle manners, and kind words, and a graceful sense of what is good and right. He pays some regard to the externals of religion. If naturally soft-hearted, he may be charitable ; or he may be keen and hard though polished, as steel. But he never denies himself anything. Every indulgence which he really desires, if he has the means, he will certainly procure. He is clothed in purple and fine linen, and fares sumptuously every day. He gives himself all that his soul lusts after, as far as he can do it without forfeiting the world's regard. He slights—perhaps jests at—seriousness and earnestness. He is well-attired and well-mannered, careful in word, patient and forbearing in demeanour. He has many friends, or a circle of choice friends, who admire him, and in whose society he takes pleasure. The world cherishes him ; for she sees in him herself, under the fairest and goodliest shape. His wisdom, his maxims, his manners, his morality, his religion, are all taken

from the world, and taste of the world, and neither exceed nor fall short of the world's measure, and reflect the world back upon herself, as in a flattering mirror.

But there is one thing which he never knows, and that is the Cross ; neither its doctrine, nor its practice. To him, Christian truth is one of the manifold opinions of the world. The Bible is a good book, the Church a useful institution, the Name of JESUS a sound to bow at, His commandments pure and wise, and beautiful statements, instructing his taste, but not interesting his affections. He will not touch the Cross with one of his little fingers. There is a story, that when Antony, the hermit, was in his cell, one came to him, beautiful and bright, in the apparent likeness of the LORD JESUS, shining with glory, and crowned with majesty ; but he could not show the marks of the Cross, and Antony knew that it was Satan.

Such is the worship of the refined worldling ; it is all fair and soft, imaginative and beautiful. It has no traces of the Cross, no marks of the crucified Redeemer. It is the prince of darkness appearing as the god of this world, in unreal beauty and deceiving lustre ; and, by a show of grace, and elegance, and gentleness, blinding the eyes of them that believe not.

The other man of the world is the man of labour and toil ; a statesman, a politician, a warrior, a student, a lawyer, a man of science, a merchant, a tradesman, a mechanic, a labourer. To him the world has another character, its god another form and a different aspect. He is much occupied ; his mind much distracted. He has to earn his food, or his wealth, or his distinction, or his power, by the sweat of his brow, or

the labour of his soul. "He rises early, and goes late to rest, and eats the bread of carefulness." He devotes his time, his talents, his thoughts, to the acquisition of some earthly treasure. This treasure may be the riches of England, the empire of earth, political power, scientific attainments, the farm and merchandize, a naked competency, or mere food and raiment, a bare sufficiency for himself and those who depend upon him. This is the object to which his life is devoted. He works for it with more or less earnestness, according to his disposition, circumstances, and education.

He has, therefore, no real time for religion, no leisure for true devotion and self-examination, no hours to spare on his spiritual interests. His view of religion, if he has one, is that it certainly is a matter of great, even the highest importance, but not a thing of this world; that it is something for the world to come, the business of angels and saints; on earth, perhaps, the business of recluses, or of the Clergy. It may be that he goes so far as to regard it as a portion of his own business on Sundays, or as a householder. It is decent, respectable, needful or useful for his character, that some respect should be paid to that to which all the world does homage, willing or unwilling, namely, Christianity. But then it must not interfere with his earthly success; it must not be a business of his heart. GOD must not be in *all* his thoughts. Religion must not be a concern, and the primary concern, of every day in his life. The will of GOD must not enter into and spoil his calculations; it may interfere with his schemes. The Gospel must not be troublesome, nor inflict its rules upon him, in the senate,

in the market, or in his house. It is not his treasure, and therefore his heart is not with it.

Its preachers must not be over-zealous ; they must keep their place. The word must not be forced home to his conscience, or else he has to rebel against it ; and such an open opposition is not what he wishes. He desires to shuffle, and make excuses with his GOD ; to promise to Him, and break his promises, if convenient ; to keep the kingdom of heaven as a vague, dreamy, indistinct vision hovering near him ; to soothe him when disappointed, or in trouble. But he has no notion of storing up his time, his powers, his money, his treasure, there ; it seems too indefinite, too misty, too uncertain, to trust, in comparison with what to him are the tangible and solid realities of life.

Such men can be clear-headed and decided, far-seeing in forming plans, active and energetic in accomplishing them. They may understand and obey all the proverbs of practical wisdom, discern with eagle glance the value of moments, the danger of delay, the necessity of promptness in all affairs of earth. They may be regular, consistent and persevering ; they may be truthful, and honest, and uncompromising in all their dealings with their fellow-men ; they may hate all indistinctness and vagueness in conceptions, all falsehood and dishonesty in deed or word where their earthly conduct and earthly brethren are concerned. "For the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light."

Yet how do they fail to apply, how utterly do they neglect every one of these principles, wherever their souls are at stake, and in all their dealings with the

LORD their GOD. In all their reasonings with their consciences, in all religious matters they love to have everything uncertain and changing. They palter and trifle and delay on any shadow of a pretext; they multiply excuses for doing nothing, which ring hollow and counterfeit even to themselves; they are more unpunctual than the most heedless spendthrift, more dilatory than the idlest sluggard, more insincere than the liar whom they abhor, more unthankful than the reprobate on whom they can waste no pity.

Nothing is more extraordinary to a spiritual mind, than the utter inability of such men of business and toil, so prudent, so subtle, so far-seeing, so right-minded in all the affairs of earth, to apply the simplest maxims of reason or common sense, the rules of social fairness, or even the easiest calculations of arithmetic, in their conceptions and comparisons of the eternal world.

It is their impurity which is the cause of this strange inconsistency, the fornication of the heart preferring the creature to the Creator, the spiritual idolatry which is most unclean. Self is their object, in a more modest form perhaps, and more homely garb than it wears in the eyes of the refined, but the same in substance and opposition to GOD's will. The god of this world may have put on a rougher and more honest aspect to deceive them, but he deceives them as fatally. Just as some successful cheats ape frankness and coarseness to conceal their subtlety. Their life, its regularity, its industry and providence make a fair show. But all is of the earth, earthy.

Their religion is only a system of words and names.

It has no real meaning. They do not understand what they speak of; they do not perceive their own strange inconsistency. They consider every obligation which their relation to things of earth entails upon them; they never remember the obligations which their relation to CHRIST imposes. They are almost the last persons who would think that He had spoken a parable against them, that He had said unto them, "Thou fool." The veil is on their minds; GOD has hid Himself from them. Their foolish hearts are darkened. They call themselves wise, and "increased with goods, and having need of nothing, and know not that they are wretched and miserable, and poor and blind and naked."

They glory in their faithfulness, diligence, honesty, industry; and all the while they are entirely neglecting their Master's work, burying His talents in their earthly spirits, perverting to their own use that which He intrusted to them for His honour, and the common good, and their own salvation.

There is a third impurity, which is sometimes, though not always, connected with this worldliness, namely the impurity of self-righteousness.

In the New Testament language this is hypocrisy, the impurity of the Pharisee, the whitening of the sepulchre over dead men's bones, and all uncleanness. The Scriptures also seem to represent it as the worst and crowning form of impurity, as producing the most entire and hopeless alienation from GOD, as ending in the irremissible offence against the HOLY GHOST, the sin which hath no forgiveness, neither in this world nor in the world to come. Therefore those defiled

with other impurities, with the extreme form of unchastity, and the extreme form of worldliness, the harlots, and the publicans, are spoken of as entering into the kingdom of heaven before the Scribes and Pharisees, before those who were polluted with self-righteousness and hypocrisy.

This impurity consequently appears to be the most penetrating and corrupting. It must go deepest into the very vitals of religion, and must extend itself more fatally than all others throughout the whole character. Thus also the darkness and obliquity of understanding and conscience which result from it will be deeper and more full of death than those contracted by any other sin. By it the face of GOD must be entirely hid. At no time is an enemy more to be dreaded than when he is disguised as a friend. Satan is never more dangerous than when he is "transformed into an angel of light." The god of this world has at no other time such a blinding power, as when he passes off his own lurid darkness for the illumination of the SPIRIT of GOD. It is when he pretends to be a prophet and a Christ, that he would "deceive, if it were possible, the very elect."

This impurity therefore being of so subtle, secret, and illusory a character, and at the same time so exceedingly sinful, so inevitably ruinous, requires our most serious and careful consideration. If we turn to the Gospel record of the Pharisees in whom this sin was especially exhibited, we perceive it in the following characters. They had a mortified appearance. They made much of external ordinances and those chiefly of their own devising. They had a certain number of

set phrases and forms of speech which they thought of great importance. They were very exact in fulfilling all the minutæ of the law. They had a thousand washings and dippings and sprinklings and innumerable wearisome rules difficult to observe or even remember. They pretended to be great observers of the Sabbath. They professed a wonderful zeal for God's worship and temple. They were great readers and expounders of Holy Scripture. They wrote it everywhere in their houses, on their cups, and on their garments. They had it always in their mouths. They had counted its words, its letters, its dots. They yet further affected such diligence in obedience, that they were not satisfied with the requirements of the law. They added human traditions, inventions of their own, devised in late times, which made a show of imposing greater strictness than GOD required in a thousand little matters. They had also a thorough acquaintance with the prophecies and interpretations of Holy Writ. They would tell to others every particular of MESSIAH'S Advent. They were esteemed, and esteemed themselves, very enlightened and complete saints.

What was there wanting? The weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith, humility, charity, and the love of GOD. Their exemplary religion was all hollow. In all their observances they sought the "praise of men," honour from one another, not the honour which cometh from GOD only. By prayers, alms, fastings, by all their mortified appearance they aimed at earthly distinction and aggrandizement. Their study of Scripture ; their skill in expo-

sition ; their Sabbatical observances ; their broad phylacteries, their rigid directions which they would not touch with one of their own fingers ; their innumerable rules for every day's, and every hour's behaviour ; their traditional additions ; their own modern inventions which they exalted above the very laws of GOD ; all were in reality directed to temporal advancement and reputation. They measured by the same standard their whole appearance, life, religion, devotion.

In short, everywhere in all their whole conduct the thought of self was before their eyes, the one true object of their desire, affection, worship. And as they were busied about holy things, and as GOD's house, service, word, religion were most in honour and reverence among the Jews, therefore they aimed at this self-aggrandizement more especially in that which was best, holiest, purest. They used all the various known ways of approach to GOD, as avenues to the promotion of their own honour. They heaped service upon service, precept upon precept, devotion upon devotion, alms, prayers, fasts, forms, phrases, all in short that was popular or fashionable in religion, in order to exalt, not the LORD Whom they professed to honour, but themselves, in order to rear the throne of this idol self up to heaven, and perfume it with the incense of mutual flattery, and the wonder and reverence and applause of the multitude.

Thus they became hypocrites ; that is, not consciously overreaching men, but players, players of a part which did not really belong to them, self-deceivers, "deceiving and being deceived," thinking themselves wise, "saying that they saw," understood,

that is, all about divine things, separating themselves from the rest of mankind, supposing that they were not as other men, but Abraham's children, the elect saints who could never fail, who knew all things, who were GOD's favoured children, the only objects of His peculiar care, the possessors of His blessings, apart from the people, who knew not the law and were accursed. GOD was the avowed object of their flaming zeal. The real object was self, self in that miserable form, glory which cometh from man, the selfishness of the false teacher, prophet, and guide.

And this selfishness, outwardly fair, is a more fearful impurity than that of unchastity or worldliness, more terrible to witness, more difficult to cure. It is a more unmitigated and intense selfishness, deeper in the heart; the abomination of desolation standing where it ought not in the innermost shrine of GOD, a sin near unto that of unclean spirits, of him whose own brightness and beauty deceived him, who said, I will be as GOD, I will be like the Most High. "For that angel by loving himself more than GOD, and delighting more in himself, than in Him in Whose participation he should have been blessed, swelled with pride, and departed from the Supreme Essence and fell.¹ For perverse self-love deprived the swelling spirit of the holy society of angels, and shut him up through wickedness to satiate himself with misery.² Therefore turning to himself, he turned at once from the Light, and became dark."³ He sank into pride, and thence into envy, and thence into eternal despair. "I saw Satan like lightning fall from heaven."

¹ S. Augustine, iii. 133.

² Id. 312.

³ Id. 437.

which shoots down dazzling, and as it falls vanishes into gloom, and destroys itself in its work of destruction.

As Satan in the midst of the angelic glories, "when every precious stone was his covering," amidst the melodies of his "tabret and pipes," of the graces bestowed upon him, "on the holy mountains of GOD," "walking up and down in the midst of the stones of fire," "the covering cherub,"¹ found his heart lifted up by his beauty, and corrupted his wisdom by reason of his brightness, immediately his glory departed, and his wisdom became folly, and looking upon himself as if all that he had was his own, contemplating, that is, himself out of GOD, at the instant he abode not in the truth, but became a liar. He hid his face from GOD, and GOD hid His face from him, and as his beauty, brightness, and wisdom came wholly from the Face of GOD, all went in an instant to return no more.

The terrible and eternal eclipse fell on him, self-love, endless and hopeless, the gulf impassable, self-love, which is self-torment and self-destruction, was fixed for ever between him and his Maker, and he became his own infinite and everlasting misery, and he has no rest day or night. No creature can rest in himself. GOD is the only rest of His creatures. He then who left GOD, left rest for evermore.

And Satan has his family, his body, the mass of corruption, the world which lieth in wickedness, in the wicked one, all liars, all who abide not in the truth, whatsoever loveth or maketh a lie, all who do his lusts, all in whom the spirit of disobedience works in

¹ See Ezek. xxviii.

any form, constitute his city, family, and body, which he leavens with his rottenness and death. And still the marks of the two cities, families, and bodies here intermingled, hereafter to be divided, are Love and Self-love.

CHRIST pleased not Himself: this is the mark of our Head. Satan pleased himself: this is the mark of our adversary. And in his body the members nearest and likeliest to him are those whose hearts are most concentrated on self, those who are the greatest self-pleasers. But these are the hypocrites, the imitators of the Pharisees; for they not only "seek their own, not the things which are CHRIST'S," but they do so in that which is best and holiest, in acts and words which profess to be, and which they imagine are directed and consecrated to GOD. While they appear to burn with zeal for His glory, their one object is the praise or favour of men, that strange and subtle delight of luring followers, of "drawing away disciples after them," the possession of that influence and character which gathers and keeps followers around them, or at least fixes the eyes of their neighbours upon them, whether in a larger or a narrower sphere.

"Language and acts," says S. Augustine, "which make themselves known to men, are accompanied by a most dangerous temptation, namely, the love of praise, which seeks and gathers men's applauses for our own peculiar exaltation. This tempts me even when I am rebuking it within myself, by the very fact that I rebuke it. Man often glories more vainly than in any other way of his very contempt of vain glory: and therefore he can no longer boast of contemning vain

glory, for he no longer despises it, when he is glorying in himself.”¹

The form of religion therefore adopted by such hypocrites will be that which is in fashion and common admiration. If austerity is in fashion, they will be austere ; if easiness and miscalled charity, they will be full of philanthropic sentiments ; if external worship and splendid ceremonial are in high esteem, they will carry them out to their utmost extent ; if the world is dwelling chiefly on the spiritual character of religion, they will be full of contempt for sacraments and solemnities, and loud in their applause of what they name the essentials of the Gospel, in their admiration of humiliations and professions of sinfulness. They will, as the ancient Pharisees, have set phrases, and deal in mutual flatteries ; they will have their party, out of which all is darkness ; they will be ready and eager, and harsh in their condemnation of others ; they will be satirical and sarcastic toward the moderate and right-minded.

This spirit, the spirit of religious ridicule, is too common at present, and it is an evil sign. The scoff, the derision, to use the significant but homely Scripture word, “the turning up of the nose,” reigned in the Pharisees. They met the SAVIOUR with it on every possible occasion ; they answered His gracious and irresistible convictions with it when they had no other reply. And this sarcastic, sneering spirit will receive the name of zeal, sincerity, truthfulness. They will be even proud of it ; they will refuse to see any earnestness or faithfulness in those from whom

¹ S. Aug. Conf. x. 38.

they differ. If they cannot gainsay their successes, they will attribute them to accident, to design, to subtlety, to deceitfulness, to anything rather than the manifest SPIRIT of GOD.

There is, continues S. Augustine, another form of the same evil temptation within us, by which self-pleasers grow vain, although they please not others, or displease them, or even make no attempt to please them. But while they please themselves, they displease Thee much, O GOD ; not only glorying in evil gifts for good, but in Thy good gifts as if they were their own, or in them as Thine indeed, but obtained by their own deserts, or even as from Thy grace, but then they rejoice not in them for the common good, but envy them to others. For being lifted up with pride, they are not far from envy, secret pining envy disguised under fair terms and goodly professions from the world and from themselves.¹ Self-pleasing, pride, envy, this was the three-fold fall of the Prince of darkness ; this was the three-fold wickedness of the Pharisee. They are always the consummation of hypocrisy. They will also harden themselves against the calls of GOD, against the “still small voice” within them, which would fain expose their hypocrisy, scatter their delusions, and set them before themselves.

And here we observe the point, at which for the most part religious persons, or rather those who seem to themselves religious, fail and enter into the pathway of hypocrisy. They have, perhaps, been full of good resolutions and professions. Perhaps they have been forming great schemes of charity and devotion.

¹ S. Aug. Conf. x, 39.

They have been observing many good and pious rules : they have been nourished on holy ordinances. Their hearts have melted with contrition and tenderness ; their hands have been stretched out in active benevolence ; their feet have been wearied with following the LORD. They have kept all the literal commandments from their youth up, like the rich young man in the Gospel ; or like Judas, have forsaken all to become disciples ; or like Saul, have humbled themselves as unworthy under GOD's exalting mercies ; or like Balaam, they have been rich in gifts of knowledge, in spiritual communings and meditations, and in outpourings of the wisdom bestowed upon them. They took pleasure in all these ; they thought themselves perfectly sincere. Then comes the trial.

The LORD's visitation is brought near. The still small voice speaks. GOD sees the self which they see not in all their service, obedience, and worship. He lays upon them some commandment, slight perhaps—perhaps almost unreasonable in appearance as that laid on Saul. He forbids them some little indulgence, as He did our first parents. He exposes them to a momentary pressure of distress or want, as He did Esau ; or He requires them to give up earthly comforts, as He did the rich young man ; or He entrusts them with some special responsibility, some office perhaps or ministry of religion, or mercy holy and blessed, as He entrusted the alms-bag to Judas. There in that little summons, that slight demand upon their faith, that gracious charge, His judgment and their probation are wrapped up.

It is the decisive call, that which is named CHRIST's

day ; the time of visitation. It is the motion of the HOLY SPIRIT requiring them in that seemingly little matter to be as little children, to humble themselves by obedience, as the SON of GOD humbled Himself to the cradle and the swaddling clothes, and the voicelessness of infancy ; committing their way to Him, using their office and responsibility sincerely and faithfully, patiently waiting His time ; submitting implicitly to a commandment which appears unreasonable, cheerfully surrendering what they have hitherto deemed a lawful relaxation ; subjecting their own reason to His infinite omniscience.

If self is your real object in this quiet, hidden, and seeming slight, but daily, trial, you will always succumb. All earthly motives, all selfish reasons fail you then. The world is away. You are alone with CHRIST. He calls you, calls you for His own sake alone to follow Him ; to follow Him, taking up your daily cross. If your love is really and entirely set on Him ; if your heart is whole with His, as His heart is with yours, then naturally and with joy you will embrace each blessed silent, unknown opportunity of serving, thanking, glorifying Him, of honouring Him in preference to yourself. Such acts of faith will be to you like the little daily, but precious, marks of love which we pay to our nearest and dearest relations, invaluable occasions of pleasing Him in Whom our whole life and joy are wrapped up.

At such times He calls you to surrender that which in reality is far more difficult to give up than carnal indulgencies, or earthly possessions, your self of selfs ; your own wisdom and will, wholly and entirely ; to

choose His honour before your honour ; to yield yourself up in your heart of hearts a living and loving sacrifice ; to lay yourself on the altar of the Cross as a whole burnt offering. This is what He intends when He bids you die and be buried with Him ; hate all things, and your own life also for His sake and the Gospel's. Here is shown "the charity which never faileth." Here is that "fire of the LORD in Zion, and that furnace in Jerusalem" which He foretold that He would kindle. Here He sits with the refiner's fire and fuller's soap to purify the sons of Levi, His chosen ones. "And who may abide the day of His coming?"¹

Men would rather die with Him in agonies, than die to their own honour, and be swathed with Him in the cradle.² Littleness is more abhorrent than actual death ; for death may be suffered from an apparent principle of grandeur and magnanimity ; but to be counted as nothing like children, not to dare to depend on ourselves, but to become vile and contemptible ; to keep our soul as a weaned child, (as David speaks,) or as that of a feeble, decrepit old man, whom children mock at, this is the greatest trial and torment to our haughtiness and self-admiring courage.

All the rest that we give up is in comparison nothing. All other things are but the garments of the heart, which it can remove as with the tip of its fingers. But to give up our own wisdom and will, our own honour, which is the innermost life of our soul, is to tear off its skin, to flay it alive, to pierce ourselves even to the marrow of our bones.

The more earnest, resolute, wise you have been, the

¹ Mal. iii. 3.

² Fenelon, i. 446.

more you have been in reputation and honour ; the more gifts and graces you have received and used, the more your words and works have been, as those of Balaam, prophetic, successful, marvellous ; the more you have lived above the flesh ; the more difficulty is there in this entire self-abandonment, this entering willingly a second time into your mother's womb, this becoming as a little child who knows not what it wants, can do nothing, think nothing of itself, but can only commit itself to the Hand which guides it ; this being satisfied to be led on step by step, or even to be carried wholly and entirely, without knowing whither the LORD is conveying you, or comprehending the meaning of each step which He thus requires you to take. Yet this is to know nothing save JESUS CHRIST and Him crucified, which is the sum of wisdom. This is the mark of the true Levite.

Nevertheless, although there is nothing more reasonable than to be thus unreasonable,¹ nothing more in accordance with all true principles of philosophy than to exchange our own knowledge which is ignorance, and our own wisdom which is folly, for the Omniscience and uncreated wisdom of GOD, though it is more absurd for a Christian to cling to his own understanding, than to light a candle in the noonday sunshine, there is still nothing more difficult than to be thus truly reasonable ; and here at this point it is that insincere and self-deceiving souls retire from the LORD's invitations, even when He requires of them the living sacrifice, when He says to them, "My son, give Me thine heart."

¹ S. Hilary de Trin.

A sacrifice without a heart was of evil omen with antiquity. It presaged the worst disasters. Our heart is often held fast by some imperceptible chain of selfishness. It is often proved and tried most sorely in some daily common point of conduct. If we offer, not a multitude of outward services only, but even ourselves also on the altar of the Cross, and only keep back our heart ; if our heart will not part from this suspicious indulgence, or shrinks from that one step to which the love of CHRIST constrains us, it is absent from our sacrifice. And how great is the disaster, how deep the ruin which this absence of our heart presages !

When almsgivers perish through their alms, it is from keeping back that part of the price which is really valuable, namely their heart. A lie is there, if they seek themselves in their oblations. Do they not in spirit fall down dead, like Ananias and Sapphira, when they kept this back, while professing to be all CHRIST'S ? Are they not lying, not unto man, but unto GOD the HOLY GHOST ?¹

When prophets, kings, apostles fell, still it was from the same cause ; from offering themselves as a sacrifice, apparently a whole burnt sacrifice, but withholding the heart. Set secretly on the world, in Balaam, Saul, Judas, the heart was lacking ; and such a sacrifice is “the abomination of desolation, sitting where it ought not to be”—in the heart which GOD has chosen for His sanctuary.

How like to Satan's is the impurity thence resulting ? “Have I not chosen you twelve ? and one of you is a devil ?” “After the sop, Satan entered into

¹ Jeremy Taylor, Sermons.

Judas." ¹Ah! how pitiable is the condition of the soul when it begins to reject the secret invitations of GOD, Who requires that it should die to itself! There is but an atom, presently the atom becomes a mountain,—an impassable barrier between GOD and it. It simulates deafness when GOD asks some little trifle; it fears to hear Him. It would fain persuade itself that it has not heard Him. It says so to itself; but it cannot convince itself. It has heard Him; it has recognised His voice; but it disobeys It. It rejects Him with open eyes; it entangles itself in inextricable meshes. It doubts of everything; its graces appear illusions. It seeks for guides and advisers to appease its trouble; it finds them, for they are always at hand. They will "speak to it smooth things, prophesy deceits."

The more he tries to free himself, the worse he grows. He is as the stag pierced with the arrow, carrying it in his side; every movement drives it deeper. Woe unto them of whom GOD expects everything, and who fulfil not their grace! Woe unto them who resist Him inwardly. Strange sin, this sin against the HOLY GHOST; this sin, irremissible in this world and the next! Is it not resistance to this inward invitation? He who resists the work of conversion there, will be persecuted here, first by trouble, and then by blindness; and in the world to come, by the torments of the outer darkness.

Here then is the point to which we must attend, as the point where GOD begins to reveal or to hide

¹ Fenelon, i. 283, from whose spiritual treatises several of the following observations are taken.

His face. Not in external observances, not in self-appointed works, however numerous or goodly in appearance ; not in devout emotions and impressions ; not in the countless sacrifices, the “ thousands of bullocks and rams, the ten thousands of rivers of oil ;” not in the sharpest austerities, or the most active labours, “ the fruit of our body for the sin of our soul ;”¹ but nearer at home, deeper within us, in the meek and quiet spirit, the hidden man of the heart, shall we find the one sacrifice which GOD looks for at our hands,—the submission and mortification of our own wisdom and will,—the entire renunciation of self.

Then when we have no life of our own, we have the life of GOD instead. For our own wisdom we have His wisdom ; for our own knowledge, His knowledge. Then in worship, solemnities, labours, alms, mercies, asceticisms, and all our service, whether great or small, and whether ministering or waiting, we, as we never seek ourselves, still find Him. In everything whatsoever we shall still find JESUS, and in Him GOD. As we look away thus completely from ourselves, we encounter His Face ; our eyes meet His. In His light we see light ; it is vain to seek light elsewhere, but in His light we see it.

Then all things kindle with the splendour of His Presence. Then the tabernacle is full of the bright Shechinah of His glory. All things without us, and all things within us, our whole temporal and our whole spiritual life, are clothed upon with immortality. Then life and death, heaven and earth, and streams and flowers, and a particle of dust, all are eloquent of

¹ See Micah vi. 6, 7.

Him, utter oracles and “sermons.” Then, in offices and sacraments, we find the ministration of righteousness and of eternal life, which exceeds in glory. Then the “day is dawning, and the day-star arising in our hearts ;” and the “light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days, in the day that the LORD bindeth up the breach of His people, and healeth the stroke of their wound.”¹

“For this health is always connected with the sight of God’s countenance ; and as in health all our senses are active and perfect, so in the health which the revelation of the face of GOD in CHRIST, reconciling the world unto Himself, and not imputing their trespasses unto them, bestows upon us, the senses of our soul become quick and perfect.”² GOD reveals unto us His deep things by His SPIRIT. He makes us love His face, and love His illumination, and love that He should instruct us, and love that He should require more and more of us, and love that good, and perfect, and acceptable will of GOD concerning us, and love that holy jealousy with which He watches over us, and will not permit even the least estrangement from Him ; love, in, short, His love, and thus, by this communion of love, reflect His light, and see His face, as far as it is possible at present. Thus “we all, with open face beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the LORD, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the SPIRIT of the LORD.”

This revelation, however, is, we know, nothing compared with that which is promised us hereafter. O,

¹ Isa. xxx. 6.

² S. Hil. de Trin.

my GOD, what will be the last unveiling of Thy face? what will that blessedness be when Thou art all in all? what the embrace of Thy love, enfolding us, and turning us into the perfect likeness of Thyself? what when this present life of love shall seem as death, and this present light of love as darkness, when compared with the manifestation of Thyself which Thou wilt then vouchsafe to us? "Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed;"¹ the light, that is, of Thy Presence in the Church, and of the doctrine of Thy Godhead, received and discerned by faith, shall go out as stars in the sunlight before Thy glorious appearing, and the full disclosure of the FATHER in Thee, and of the love of GOD.

What shall be the splendour of Thine espousals, of Thy marriage feast? Thou betrothedst Thy Church on the Cross; Thou shalt wed it from Thy throne. Thou betrothedst it on Calvary; Thou shalt espouse it in the heaven of heavens. The betrothal was in shame and anguish, and blood and death, amidst shouts and yells, and mockeries, rending rocks, and darkening skies. But as was that humiliation, so shall be the exaltation.

"Come hither; I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife."² Amidst what multitudes of saints, amidst what hosts of angels, amidst what choirs of cherubim and seraphim, amidst what light and insufferable brightness, with what hosannahs and hallelujahs, with what universal jubilees of love, with what rapture of bliss, with what deep calm of unutterable joy shall the espousals be celebrated.

¹ Isa. xxiv. 23.

² Rev. xxi. 9.

“And he showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from GOD, having the glory of GOD ; and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass.”¹ O blessed, holy Jerusalem, mother of us, when shall we see thee,—see, rather, in thee, “GOD all in all? Thou hast thy Spouse here, in Whom, though now thou seest Him not, yet believing, thou rejoicest with joy unspeakable, and full of glory. These joys, however, are but dreams and shadows, compared with those hereafter. They are gone ere thou canst grasp them. “By night, in my bed, I sought Him Whom my soul loveth ; I sought Him, but I found Him not.”²

But fear not ; the truth is coming. “Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty.” “Thou shalt see Him face to face, and shalt be like Him, seeing Him as He is.” “The sun shall be no more thy light by day, neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee. For the LORD shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended.”³

“And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it ; for the glory of GOD did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.”⁴

And now, LORD, what say Thy saints? There is one only calm and sure tranquillity, one only solid, firm, and lasting security ; and this is ours when withdrawn from the whirlwinds of this unquiet life, and settled in the anchorage of the harbour of salvation, we lift our eyes from earth to heaven ; and, admitted to the grace of the LORD, and made near to GOD in our

¹ Rev. xxi. 10.

² Solomon's Song iii. 1.

³ Isa. lx. 19.

⁴ Rev. xxii. 23.

mind, we rejoice to have within our conscience whatsoever seems to others sublime or great among the things of earth. He who is greater than the world can desire nothing, regret nothing, in or of the world. How firm, how immoveable a defence is ours ! What a heavenly safeguard of unfading blessings, when we are loosed from the snares of this entangling life, and purged from the dregs of earth into the light of immortality and eternity ! We see with what subtle corruption our enemy was once destroying us ; and we cannot but love what we shall be, better, the more clearly we discern and loathe what we once were. There is no need of money, of bribery, of the hand or work of man, to attain this highest dignity and power. It is the free, gratuitous gift of GOD. As the sun radiates, the day illuminates, the fountain irrigates, the shower bedews of its own accord spontaneously, so the SPIRIT of GOD infuses itself into us. When the soul, gazing heavenward, has come to know its Maker, it is exalted far above all earthly principality and power, and begins already to be what it believes itself to be. There can be no poverty, when the wealth of heaven has once satiated our heart. We speak with GOD, and GOD with us. He instructs us, He disposes of us. The house which He enriches none can impoverish ; it must abide in living beauty, untarnished honour, undecaying splendour. It cannot be abolished or extinguished. It can only change once again for the better when its body shall be restored.¹

“ Late did I love Thee, O Beauty, ancient and new !
late did I love Thee ! And behold Thou wert within

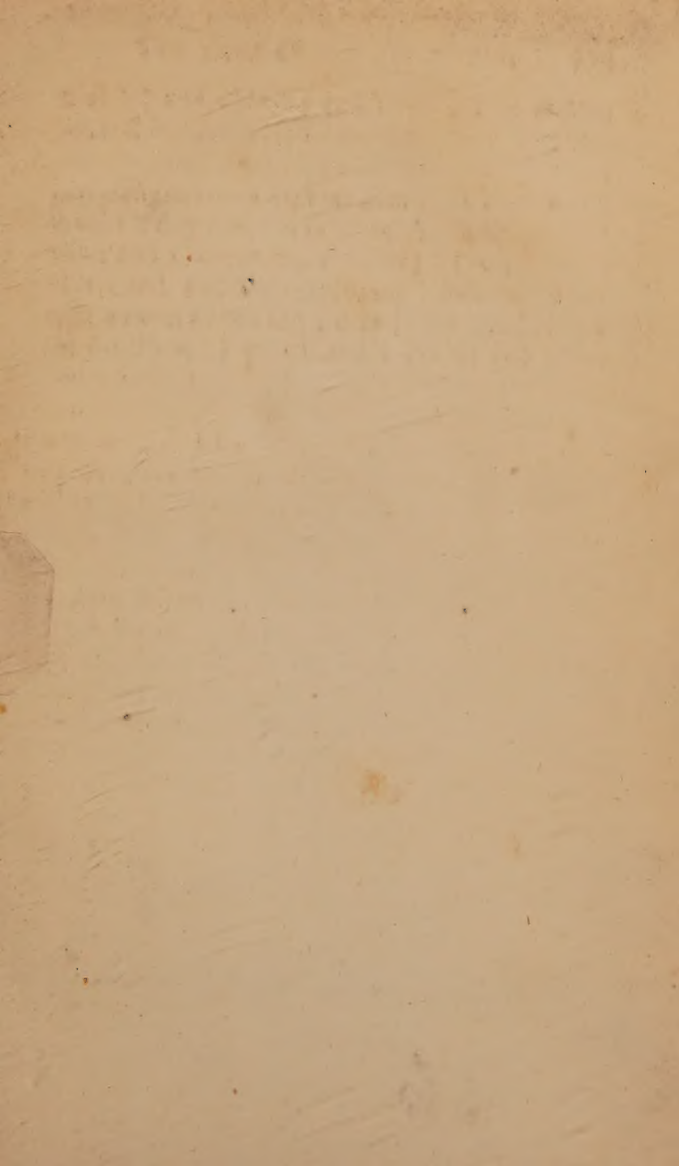
¹ S. Cyprian de Grat. Dei, c. 14.

me, and I was without ; and there I kept seeking Thee, and unlovely myself, kept stumbling against Thy lovely creation. I was with myself, and I was not with Thee. Thy creatures kept me from Thee, which would not exist if they were not in Thee. Thou calledst, and criedst, and piercedst my deafness ; Thou glitteredst and shonest, and dispersedst my blindness. Thou gavest a sweet odour, and I drew in my breath, and I pant for Thee. I tasted, and I hunger and thirst. Thou touchedst me, and I burn for Thy peace.¹ Do Thou speak the truth in my heart, for Thou alone speakest it : and let me enter into my chamber and sing to Thee hymns of love, groaning unutterable groans in this my pilgrimage, and remembering Jerusalem, and lifting up my heart to her, to Jerusalem, my home, Jerusalem, my mother, and to Thee, her King, her Light, Father, Guide, Spouse, her chaste and mighty Delight, her solid Joy, her ineffable, universal Blessedness, (for Thou art the one supreme and only true Good) ; and let me never turn away, until Thou gatherest all that I am into the peace of that dearest Mother, where are the first fruits of my spirit, out of this present desolation and deformity, and conform me to Thyself, and confirm me for ever, my GOD, my Mercy !"²

¹ S. Augustine, Conf. x. 27.

² Id. xii. 16.

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